SELF, SOCIETY AND THE SECOND WORLD WAR

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The Negotiation of Self on the Home Front by Diarist and Keighley Schoolmaster Kenneth Preston 1941-1945

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Abstract

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Keywords: self, community, Second World War, citizenship, masculinity, twentieth century modernity, civilian defence, voluntarism, religion, Keighley

This study examines the interaction of the Second World War with the selfhood of Kenneth Preston, a Keighley schoolmaster, using primarily the exceptionally rich content of Preston's *Diary*, maintained 1941-1945. In tracing Preston's home front experience, attention is given to the ways in which the war interacted with the individual's own self and social conceptions, as well as ways in which subjective experiences and perceptions translated into objective realities, such as in Preston's participation in the war effort. Illuminating the personal dimensions of the war experience enabled a broad range of meanings and "webs of significance" to emerge, allowing for examination of the interplay between the conflict and understandings of class, community, gender, citizenship, social mores, and aspects of social change during the conflict.

Preston's understandings of himself and of society are intriguing contributions to the discussion surrounding active wartime citizenship, and further historical awareness of the meanings and understandings held within the British population during the era of the Second World War. In particular, the prestige the war offered to modernistic notions of science and technical intelligence is shown to have held a central place in the war experience of this particular individual and in his perception of the rise of the welfare state. With its focus on selfhood, the study is distinguished from arguments grounded in analysis of cultural products from the era; it also contributes to understandings of the causes and implications of social change, as well as the war's personal impact on the male civilian.

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Contents

CHAPTER 1 Introduction

1.1 *Peace—the End, or the Beginning?*

On 15 August 1945, inscribed in history forever as V-J Day, Kenneth Preston sat alone in his study, alternating between reading Aldous Huxley's *Point Counter Point* and cutting clippings from copies of *John O' London's* and *The Listener* which he considered using for future lessons with his sixth form literature students at the local boys' grammar school. He could hear revellers pass by his home throughout the day and he had heard reports from his wife and son who had ventured out to glimpse the atmosphere of exultation for themselves. Yet rather than look upon the moment with gladness and jubilation, Preston felt the need for quiet reflection. As evening approached, he took to writing in his diary to try to work through his thoughts on the occasion. Despite pondering on events, little satisfaction could be gained—he looked upon the future with decided concern.

Throughout the conflict he had felt increasingly out of step with society. As many looked forward to fulfilling a vision of a New Jerusalem, Preston wondered about the feasibility of doing so, and questioned whether what was being tossed aside was as bad as many felt it to be. He was a willing and active participant in community life, serving in a local charity, and was a committed member of his church and he was unsure whether the new government programmes being discussed as a result of the Beveridge Report would allow any room for voluntary organisations. He was also a committed school master and worried about the impact of new policies on education. Most of all, he questioned the trust which seemed to be widely being placed in science and technology to move society forward. He had felt as though this same trust had already begun during the war to affect society's sense of humanity. The 'gloating' he saw expressed by many over Allied bombing campaigns startled him. He also felt that at work and in other areas a sort of social Darwinism had arisen as a result of an ethos of efficiency made necessary by war, but which was being incorporated in lasting ways into British society. He saw society as adopting more technically prescribed definitions of success, which was to the detriment to the arts, but which also had wider and more personal effects. As the war drew to a close, he expressed that for these reasons and others he was

not less concerned for the future than he had been of the past. In the end, what comfort he found came in setting down his resolution to do his bit for the peace that was to come.

Considering the horrors of the war just endured by some, and the disruptions and hardships endured by many, how is it possible at a moment of such clear victory and relief that an individual could not look to the future with a sense of hopefulness and anticipation? Kenneth Preston was not a political firebrand trying for attention at a Speakers' Corner; he was a soft-spoken, Oxford educated devotee of English literature, poetry, and drama. He married his sweetheart, and kept regular, rational routines and habits as an active member of the community and as senior English master at the local grammar school. He had not held such a bleak outlook in the early years of the war; then, he had believed that a very different Britain would necessarily emerge from the war. It was not an Orwellian dystopia he envisioned would be the end result of Britain's efforts, but a more thoughtful society, less concerned with the pursuit of pleasure and material comforts, and more concerned with cooperative, sustainable living both at home and abroad.

Given Preston's demure manner, it is unlikely the world would have knowledge of such charged feelings as took shape during his wartime experience but for the *Diary* he began on 1 January 1941.[1] In doing so, he put down on a daily basis his thoughts surrounding world events and events closer to home, as well as his own life amongst them. At war's end he claimed not to know why he had begun the *Diary* except perhaps as a means of keeping some record of events should Britain suffer a Nazi invasion.[2] However, the *Diary* was much more than a 'record of events', instead it became a space to set down and explore his feelings and reactions, to record not only the dramatic events abroad, but also more subtle changes he noticed at home—women smoking on the street, a new strong-armed management style at work, the incursion of bureaucracy into every-day life, the increased thirst for motoring as the war came to an end. A crucial aspect of the *Diary* as it relates to the intent of this study is that he also wrote of how he understood such changes and how he felt personally affected by them.

Using the wartime *Diary* of Kenneth Preston as the primary source for enquiry, this study explores the complex interaction of selfhood with the era of the Second World War. It has two primary aims, to explore how the war affected Preston's conception of himself and society, and also to ask what were the consequences of his perceptions—how did his perceptions and understanding affect his engagement with society and the world around him? Within this, it seeks also to further historical awareness of the meanings and understandings available to the individual in British society during the era of the Second World War through exploration of Preston's own understanding of events and phenomena. Although this study is concerned with Preston as an individual and his subjective experience of the Second World War, it also necessarily considers his experience within a wider context. As philosopher Kim Atkins tells us: 'questions about who I am and what I should do are not merely matters of introspection because our lives are intrinsically relational and intersubjective.'[3] Preston's negotiation of selfhood speaks to the interaction of his beliefs with wartime British society; thus exploring Preston's selfhood allows for examination of what informed, shaped, and reshaped his understandings of aspects of his world.

As school masters were classed as a reserved occupation, Preston had first-hand experience with a number of areas of the home front and learned of other aspects through voracious reading of newspapers, magazine essays, and wartime literature, as well as regular attention to the news on the radio. He also kept in contact with numerous acquaintances spread across Keighley, wider Britain, and the world. His wife and child also served as "informants" and were conversant with him concerning the events and phenomena of the day. Kenneth Preston was a thoughtful, contemplative sort of person, and gave significant consideration to various aspects of the home front, allowing for investigation here of how his beliefs and perceptions interacted with the conflict. This is seen, for instance, in his understanding of the best ways to contribute to the war effort, as well as his thinking surrounding societal-wide issues, and social change at the time. Exploring Preston's subjective experience allows for discovery not just of the what of wartime British society, but the understandings behind them—why did certain ideas and perceptions have saliency with Preston and others did not? Why did he come to the conclusions he did and not to

others? What did he feel accounted for personal and societal change? And how did his understandings inform his actions? Thus, examination takes in Preston's thinking towards a vast array of social issues and categories whilst simultaneously considering the influence and impact of these issues to one individual's personal negotiation of a period which was the confluence of ideas, war on a scale never before seen, and social changes, all of which reverberate in British society today.

1.2 *Aims*

The intent of this approach is to explore the possibilities for the impact of the Second World War upon the individual life of one Kenneth Preston, not just at a physical level, but towards his emotional well-being, his thoughts, his perceptions, and the very conception he held of himself. In order to see the impact to selfhood—where a person felt impacted emotionally, as well as how that impact was negotiated—the research required a bypassing of social commentators who tried to offer or apply a "mood" at the time for public consumption. Commentators such as J.B. Priestley and many other artists and writers, sometimes working directly for the state, necessarily wrote with an eye for morale.[4] It was this concern which prompted George Orwell's exasperated comment not long after the war of the influence of the times conspiring to turn artists into minor officials.[5] Whilst some could argue the necessity of it at the time, the influence of officialdom and propaganda specialists on wartime discourse and cultural products obscured the impact the conflict could have on the life of an individual. Yet it is often the more officially constructed images which continue to be taken into consideration by scholars. At times, propaganda images are taken as direct representations of wartime Britain, as seen for instance in Asa Briggs's *Go To It!*[6], published some 55 years after the conflict. The work is heavily populated with propaganda images from the time which are used to support Briggs's assertion of the wartime populace as resolute and united, ready and willing, even glad in some cases, to join in the war effort.

Whilst the war effort did perhaps give some a fulfilling sense of purpose,[7] this study shows a more complex interaction between the war and the individual. The findings support David Edgerton's assertion that just because: 'the Second World War was perhaps necessary does not prevent its being a terrible disaster

for humankind, and even being on the right side did not mean it was good for those who waged it.'[8] The findings here offer insightful contributions to the historians' discussion of the social repercussions of the war. Although only very limited claims can be drawn from a single person's experience, Preston's perception of wartime social change can be placed in line with Alan Milward's, David Edgerton's, and Mike Savage's assertions of the centrality of the rise of technocratic and scientific expertise to the war experience, which gave rise to a new kind of intellectual based on technocratic expertise, thus bolstering support for a technically orchestrated welfare system and the continuation of the military-industrial complex.

Furthermore, taking an approach centred on selfhood, which involved exploring *why* Preston felt as he did, gives presence to ideas and key elements of debate at the time some of which have been largely left out of histories of the conflict, including in recent scholarship dominated by analysis of wartime cultural products and public discourse. Subsequently, discussion here seeks to explore the ideas, understandings, and meanings available to the wartime populace given presence in Preston's own negotiation of the home front and his perceptions of the relationships between the war and social change.

1.3 *Reconsidering the Home Front*

The illuminating perspective of the war available in the Preston *Diary* offers new insights into understandings of citizenship and national identity held at the time, as well as numerous elements of the relationships between social change and the conflict, and also the methodological approaches towards the home front. Through exploration of the lived experience, this study will show that individual conduct during the war did not necessarily reflect motives or intent, and furthermore, that cultural products and public discourse did not wholly represent the thoughts and feelings of the wartime populace, as other scholars have similarly concluded.[9] This study contends that the historian's placing of citizenship and national identity as the primary lenses to examine behaviour and sentiment on the home front has the potential to inherently misinterpret wartime behaviour and sentiment. Because the Preston *Diary* is rich in social context, this study allows for exploration of the social spaces inhabited by the author and in some ways shows that a greater depth and breadth existed in the way of

meanings and understandings available during the era of the Second World War than were represented in wartime popular cultural products and public discourse.

Instead of manifest conduct, cultural products, popular discourse, or questions surrounding citizenship and national identity, examination here towards exploring wartime meanings and understandings, and the impact these had upon the individual, will be looked at through the lens of selfhood. As the repository of meaning attached to memories and aspects of the individual's past, selfhood serves as the interpretative centre of the individual in their world, supplying meaning and justification for the reasons individuals have for feeling and acting as they do towards themselves, others, and phenomena. It is the assertion here that exploring selfhood offers coherence and insight into otherwise seemingly unconnected and unknowable aspects of people's lived experiences.[10]

Accordance is found with Atkins's position that: 'questions about who I am and how I should live need to be addressed in the context of an interpersonal, cultural, and historical setting.'[11] Thus exploring selfhood in its lived context, as is sought here, places the individual within the orbit of their larger social world, bringing together the perceptions of the individual with the wider situation, offering greater clarity of the individual's interaction with the home front whilst shedding some light on the social circumstances in which the lived experience of the individual was played out.

Whilst a single case such as Preston's cannot be asserted to be representative of the whole of society, in his references to others, and the world around him, he does give some degree of insight into how that which was circulating publicly was privately understood and appropriated by the individual. His personal reflections in the *Diary* also allow for exploration of the implications of, and relationships with, various wartime phenomena, and in some regards this is in ways bearing greater accuracy than examination of cultural products, manifest (quantifiable) conduct, or later reminiscences. As John Tosh suggests, close examination of individuals: 'not only anchor...abstractions in lived experience, they also show us, as no other technique can do, how the compartmentalized categories of social analysis were articulated within each other on the ground.'[12]

Indeed, Preston himself proves the difficulty of analysis of wartime society based on manifest behaviour and/or cultural products. For instance, a glance at his wartime activities would suggest a strong conviction towards serving the nation and Empire as was extolled in public discourse. He was heavily involved in attending to military service-members stationed nearby and serving the wartime needs of the community through the charitable organisation Toc H, an organisation founded during the First World War by a British chaplain to offer respite to soldiers on the Western Front which transitioned after the war to serve local communities and foster Christian fellowship in Britain.[13] He also made a concerted effort to conserve and reduce consumption of everything from heating oil to food items. He was a disciplined participant in the Home Guard and fire-watching. He also worked alongside other masters at the school to incorporate the necessary measures undertaken by schools across the country during the war. As an avid student and teacher of English literature, his learning of which allowed him to attend Oxford despite an impoverished lower-middle class background, one might postulate that his familiarity with English literature had imbued him with a zest for King and Country, or perhaps that his grammar school experience had instilled in him a desire to serve the Empire.[14]

However, Kenneth Preston's efforts were not shaped by a conviction of the greatness of the British state or people. His wartime *Diary* reveals that behind his efforts lay a complex web of beliefs and understandings which he constantly consulted, evaluated, and augmented throughout the war. This complex of beliefs and understandings informed how he perceived Britain's involvement in the war effort and compelled him in his own actions within that effort. Moreover, discussion here will show that meanings for Preston were found not only in the wartime circumstance, but were informed by a pre-war life and wide variety of interests and beliefs. In this way, Preston points to the difficulty of examining wartime cultural products as a lens into the British public's wartime experience, and evidences that the perceptions and understandings of the individual towards an historical moment could be of a much more nuanced and complex composition than cultural products which were intended to bolster the wartime morale of the general populace.

1.4 *Methods*

The significant use of cultural products by historians has been something of a natural progression stemming from the so-called cultural turn, which in combination with the abundant levels of cultural products produced during the war has, in recent years, seen a growth in the use of the seemingly rich discourse found within the stockpile of wartime cultural products. Yet as Hinton states:

> Cultural histories written under the influence of such ideas [the power of discourse embedded in cultural products] tended to present accounts of the discursive formation of identity—the ways in which gender, nationality, class, or any other collective attribute were imagined and represented in newspapers, books about contemporary problems, advice manuals, academic writing, novels, films, etc.—as though they were writing the history of actual subjectivities, rather than of some of the raw materials from which real individuals constructed their own unique selfhoods.[15]

Unlike analysis of explicit behaviour or cultural products, of which we now have, according to Hinton, 'an extensive literature on' due in large part to the cultural turn in historical scholarship',[16] the complex web of beliefs and understandings which an individual consults in any given situation is not easily accessed. Thus, the Preston *Diary*, in both the depth and scope of the areas its author took under examination, as well as its author's willingness for self-examination, is a source which presents itself as a valuable means of exploring wartime selfhood, as well as the home front more generally. Preston offers testimony not only of what changes the war wrought to society and to his own life, but how the individual felt about it, why, and what impact those feelings had. In so doing, the Preston *Diary* offers personal experience, as well as an intriguing view of wartime society obscured, or simply not present, in much of the public discourse during the war.

Although it must of course be bourn in mind that his was only one view amongst millions, Preston's is, nevertheless, an intriguing view: one of British society struggling as much with social change as with military exigencies. However, this was a struggle not in the way wartime social change has long been understood, which places focus on national unity and the consequent emergence of the welfare state. Somewhat in opposition to this view of wartime Britain, Preston saw the emergence of the welfare state as only one of the end results of a massive reorganisation of British values prompted during the war not by

national unity or increased social concern, but by the full ascent of scientific and technical intelligence in British society during the conflict and increased popular support for technical methods which had begun prior to 1939. Thus, public support for the welfare state was not an indication, as Preston saw it, of a more caring society, but of an indifferent society no longer interested in or trusting of communal or charitable efforts towards social welfare. It was instead indicative of a society interested in shifting responsibility to a technical bureaucracy that would see to the proper functioning of society. In Preston's view, the ascent of the scientific and technical intelligences was the key development of wartime Britain and would pave the way for more insular living and an inherently diminished attitude towards the value of the arts, common humanity, and in a caring, thoughtful way of life.

These changes in British society which Preston perceived affected him so deeply as to cause him to fundamentally reconsider basic elements of wider society and his place in it during the course of the war. Throughout the conflict, the increasing valuation given to the scientific community and to technical methods saw, as Preston felt, his own carefully considered efforts during the war to treat the inner dimensions of a person with dignity and respect coldly dismissed. Similarly, his efforts throughout his whole adult life and career as senior English master to foster creativity, intelligence, and humanity through cultivation of an appreciation amongst his students for the arts—the most humanising of fields as he held it—were also dismissed by many, and sneered at by some. These were the people Preston felt were riding the wave of the ascent of the 'technocrat'—those who were concerned to measure, quantify and calculate their way to the top. He felt the impact of this in his professional life, but also perceived wider implications upon society. From 1941 to 1945 he wrote of being aware of a diminishment of the arts not only at the school where he taught, but throughout British society, and commented on the effects he perceived and the consequences he anticipated.

For Preston, wartime life was full of quiet observations, many of which now seem at odds with those issues raised in scholarly discourse on wartime society. Subject to mainstream historical opinion, Preston would likely seem alarmist and unreasonably sceptical. It is true that from a cursory glance, his concerns for the future could cast him as simply a pessimistic old codger,

although he was only age thirty seven when the war began. However, his *Diary* reveals him to be an informed and well-educated individual, sensitive and thoughtful towards the world around him, and prone to take a psychologically modern view of the world and of himself. He questioned, for instance, the notion that individuals and society were based on: 'the rational actions of rational human beings'.[17] Preston perceived quite clearly that, as Eric Kandel states: 'unconscious conflicts are present in everyone in their everyday actions.'[18] He also had an artist's sensibilities, looking for truth and beauty in the world around him. He wanted to share the gifts of the arts with others, believing that literature and theatre especially had expressive qualities, which along with a Romantic perception of nature, could inform and enlarge one's thinking, compassion, and appreciation for the human experience.

Through his diary writing, he tried to unravel what lay behind manifest behaviours, often using insight into the human condition revealed to him in works of English literature, contemporary and ancient philosophy, modern psychology, and his own observations on human nature. Although Preston did not discuss his views or perceptions in clinical terms, his comments were guided by a stated belief in and recognition of the existence of inner, often inexplicable, drives within human beings. While admitting to not fully understanding them, he was not dismissive or flippant in the way he thought about these concepts within his own life and within society more generally and he stayed current on many related debates and developing concepts.

Unlike many of his contemporaries then, Preston did not join with others in desiring to obtain greater mastery of the physical world through scientific advancement, but was instead more interested at looking within humankind and questioning how the inner drives of humankind were reflected in the way people engaged one with another. He had high hopes at the beginning of the war that the societies of the world would be prompted by the horror unfolding to take a closer look at their own humanity, their values and ways of life, and make fundamental changes so as to prevent another such conflict. He saw the common person, not just the Axis dictators, as bearing some blame for the war, perceiving that British and other societies had contributed to international tension over resources out of a desire for greater material comfort.[19] What he

witnessed during the course of the war, however, did little to reassure him British society, or the other major participants in the war, perceived anything of their own fault in the vast conflict.

His concern for the need to eradicate war partially stemmed from his own life having been marked by war and conflict. As a child he heard tales of the Boer War and played with toy imperial soldiers fashioned after those stationed around the Empire. As an adolescent he had full consciousness of the First World War, testified to in his recollections of that earlier home front in his *Diary.* As a grammar school student, he was taught to revere the Empire and to see his education in terms of preparing oneself for service in and for the Empire. As an adult he had closely followed the political manoeuvrings and social reactions of the inter-war years and the events leading up to the Second World War. With the onset of another major conflict, he felt sure that the world would awaken to what he saw as humanity's own destructive tendencies. Instead, his wartime life became one of largely negotiating disappointment, frustration, and disbelief. He perceived that rather than look inside themselves for causes of war—increased consumption of goods and materials, thirst for pleasure, and social indifference—members of British society exonerated themselves of wrongdoing, blaming rather the 'old men' of the Chamberlain years and the treachery of the fascist enemy. Moreover, he felt balms were sought for the horrors; rather than resolving to change destructive life-style habits, members of society formed an increasingly materialistic and pleasure-seeking outlook, which wanted to focus more on life's amusements and less on cultivating cooperative and sustainable living.

As Preston saw it, religious belief and the cultivation of a considerate life were dismissed as relics of the past—the new religion was science, and the technocrat the new ideal. He perceived that rather than reconsider war as a means of securing peace, the greater part of British society praised the easiest and most inhumane of scientific solutions to wage war—bombing raids, and ultimately collusion in the worst weapon yet known to human kind: the atomic bomb. Along with the new religion, new rules of social conduct were also implemented, those being the most efficient and most quantifiable, all of which Preston perceived as small tyrannies and incivilities that undid the civilising

work of humankind and would reshape the ethics and aims of every man, woman, and child in the years to come. He believed that society's faith in science and technical instrumentality would set it on a path which by war's end caused him to write: 'I am no less afraid for the future than I have been of the past.'[20]

His observations were noted less in bold declarative statements and much more in the day-to-day interactions faced and observations made throughout the conflict, and his subsequent contemplations. These contemplations, set down in the *Diary*, allow insight at both a personal and societal level. It is the purpose of this study to examine those beliefs and understandings in order to explore the broad range of sources informing Preston's opinions, many of which went beyond the understandings which recent scholarship has derived from cultural products and public discourse. This study also seeks to examine where and how Preston's perceptions interacted with and were impacted by his involvement with events and phenomena throughout the war. Finally, Preston's interaction with the home front will be examined for how it in turn affected how he felt about himself. The arguments in this thesis thus encompass the war's interaction with and impact on Preston's understandings of discrete categories such as masculinity, citizenship, class, community, nation, and modern selfhood, but also look at how he felt the war's impact accumulated into larger social change, and how he felt in the midst of this change.

As a northerner, and a middle-class male civilian not engaged in industrial labour, Preston's writings allow for a perspective hitherto almost unheard from on the home front. Previously, voices from the home front have come mostly from Londoners and women, since London was the political and social centre of wartime Britain and women were the largest group of society on the home front and those who most readily participated in documenting their opinions through the social research organisation Mass-Observation.[21]

Questioning why a wartime individual did as he did thus allows for fresh consideration of perceptions on the home front long explored predominantly through public commentators, public discourse, records of manifest conduct, and fragments of personal testimony. Considering why historical actors felt about their situations as they did is of particular importance when historical

conclusions are based on perceived emotional reactions of historical actors to historical phenomena, as has been widely done in historical enquiry of the Second World War home front. From such enquiry, numerous connections have been made between emotional reactions to wartime phenomena and social change, almost all of which conclude a correlation existed between the war and the creation of a more socially concerned society, which culminated in the welfare state.[22]

Yet, looking anew at correlations between wartime society, phenomena, and social change is a prominent concern raised by a growing number of historians of the era of the two world wars in recent works. Works by James Hinton, Alan Milward, David Edgerton, Mathew Thomson, Claire Langhamer, Bernhard Reiger, Martin Daunton, and Mike Savage point towards a larger need to re-examine causal relationships in the twentieth century through a discovery of the mental and emotional reality of past peoples and the social and political impact of the ascendancy of technical and scientific expertise.[23] The emphasis over the last fifty-years on collectivities, and more recently, on cultural products, has distracted historians from certain spaces of the past, particularly the personal spaces of men. It is agreed here with Hinton's argument that: 'The "cultural turn" in the writing of history has done much to enlighten us about the power of discourse to shape experience. But we have yet to discover satisfactory ways of integrating the study of the subjectivities of ordinary people in to the history of social and cultural change.'[24]

This study seeks to join and expand upon the work of other historians towards the understandings held of interior spaces during twentieth century Britain and the impact of the adoption of technical methods in public spaces upon the general public. In examining change in the twentieth century, it is critical to not neglect the interaction of the public with the emotional and private sphere. This was the era which has long been acknowledged to be a time when the personal became political. Furthermore, one's identity and self-conceptions increasingly became matters of day-to-day social importance. Thus, understanding where the subjective experience of the individual interacted with society is, and will continue to be, a critical concern amongst scholars concerned with social change. As David Cannadine argues:

> The way we see ourselves, the way we see ourselves in society, the way we see the society to which we belong, and the ways these things interconnect and change over time: these are complex and important issues that have only recently come to the surface of historical consciousness and inquiry.[25]

The study of selfhood helps us to understand where individuals shape their own lived experiences and why—in other words, to what degree an individual of the wartime era was a self-conscious knowing subject or, as Alan Munslow describes: 'determined rather than determining.'[26] Selfhood as a method of historical enquiry then aids in examining how people understood their ability to shape their lives and allows the historian to trace where social change occurred as a consequence of personal responses impacting the public order.

This thesis sets out neither to champion nor condemn Preston, however, the deep immersion in the individual's experience, which the research here both required and permitted, certainly allowed the diarist to become more human than perhaps would be allowed by research with a broader scope. In this way, Preston is neither a hero nor a villain in my estimation. In seeking to discover how he understood his situation and why he felt as he did in regard to certain wartime phenemona, it was not a matter of finding affirmation or disagreement with any particular view or conclusion in regard to wartime Britain or the wider human condition. Rather, the desire to pursue the interaction of the war with Preston's self and social conceptions increased as it became ever clearer that the *Diary* gave presence not only to the views he held, but the understandings informing those views.

Rendering what was meaningful to an individual in the past and why it was so are not simple or straightforward tasks—it has to be accepted that the task is an interpretative activity and interpretation cannot ever be complete. As much as I felt it important to understand Preston's wartime experience, no researcher can 'know' their subjects entirely. This is both helpful and challenging. It is helpful in that it reminds the researcher to 'hold your beliefs lightly',[27] and be open to going where their source takes them. However, it is challenging in that an element of mystery about the subject can never entirely be removed. For instance, I can never say with certainty whether I 'like' Preston or not. What endearement I came to feel for the research subject as a result of the prolonged contact I had with his writings stems from his consciousness before his own

situation and the awareness this prompted within myself. As Hinton before me admitted: ‘engaging with the lives of others, provokes thoughts about one’s own’.[28] Thus, as much as I was confronted with Preston’s selfhood during the course of the research, I was equally confronted with the need to recognise the importance of the inner dimensions hidden within all of our public lives.

John Tosh tells us: ‘With the benefit of hindsight it is all too easy to bend the lives of people in the past to a satisfying shape that emphasizes rationality and steadiness of purpose.’[29] This study joins with others in arguing that the study of selfhood in a specific context allows us get closer to the complexities of human behaviour, the inner-drives and meaning-making of historical peoples, than perhaps any other method, especially those methods which confine motives to the public sphere and at the level of discourse.[30] Taking the discovery of the lived experience as the guiding stance of enquiry herein, examination takes a largely chronological approach in order to explore Preston’s evolving emotional reaction over the course of the war. The war’s omnipresence in life and on the world stage caused considerable impact and required continued emotional reorganization as the ways in which the war entered into and affected Preston’s life changed over the course of the war. Not only did he have to cope with the duration of the war as the conflict went on much longer than he expected and became ever more destructive, he also had to confront new and changing circumstances the war imposed, including mandatory participation in the civilian defence organisation Home Guard and the impact the war had to the societal organisations of which he was a member. The diary also testifies to his confrontation with the changes which the war wrought to widely-held societal perspectives, and his own transformative experience.

Throughout, examination will consider how Preston’s experience was shaped by the historical, social, and cultural context in which it was lived.[31] This will be considered especially in relation to Preston’s negotiation of the various pressures applied to the individual by the state and society throughout the course of the war. Through this examination it is hoped to locate how the roles Preston took and the meanings he held of wartime events interacted with his own sense of selfhood. Within this, critical consideration will be given to Preston’s maintenance of the diary as part of his his wartime experience.

1.5 *Thesis Outline*

The following chapter will look at the methodological approaches of this study. This will include the formation of research questions, considerations specific to utilising the diary text as a source for historical enquiry, and the methodological tools drawn upon in examination of selfhood and the subjective experience. The third chapter will set the research for the study in the context of the existing historiography of the war, and discuss the analysis presented here in terms of the contribution it makes to the scholarly debate surrounding the Second World War home front. Discussion around more specific arguments which arise in relation to Preston's wartime experience will be reserved for discussion of those areas in later parts of the study. The fourth chapter offers a brief overview of Preston's pre-war life in order to provide background information and greater coherence towards examination of his perceptions during the conflict.

Following these four introductory chapters, the study will move onto presenting the research findings. The fifth chapter looks primarily at the period from 1941 to 1942 and seeks to elucidate and explore how Preston understood and engaged with his position within the wider wartime cultural framework from the beginning of the war to the time of his mandatory participation in fire-watching and Home Guard in 1942. Preston's understanding of the causes and aims of the war will be explored, as will be the implications of his understanding upon his interaction with the conflict. Examination will also be given to the influence of the state to motivate active participation on the home front. This will be explored alongside Preston's perceptions of the social construction of good citizenship and what he held of the competing notions of citizenship present at the time. Discussion of these areas also gives presence to the topics of class, community, Empire, religion and the arts in British society.

The sixth chapter concerns the time from 1942 to 1944, a time which corresponds to Preston's call-up to fire-watching and soon thereafter to Home Guard, the latter of which in particular threw into question his understanding of his efforts and the reception of those efforts within the wider war effort, as well as the belief system which those efforts were predicated upon. The chapter will explore the fracturing and subsequent re-evaluation Preston gave to his

perception of his efforts and his role in society as a result of the implications he sees in his Home Guard call-up and the experiences he faced as a result. His participation in Home Guard gives particular presence to wartime masculinity and also allows for questioning of the impact of his wartime experiences to the notions he held of community, sociability, and class.

The seventh chapter primarily addresses the greater questioning Preston undertook as the war drew to a close (1944-1945) towards the ordering of values and meaning making within British society. It explores his increasing concern over the rise of social esteem for technical-scientific intelligence, the resulting change in societal values, and the dismissal of the past which he perceived. The deeply felt implications of societal change upon Preston's selfhood will be examined, as will be the coping strategies and secure sources of selfhood he used to orient himself amidst the disjuncture he increasingly felt with society. The anticipated consequences Preston foresaw which caused him to be ill-at-ease with the future of British society by war's end will also be presented. Examination here will be placed in the context of arguments concerned with social change raised in recent scholarly works and calls in particular by David Edgerton, Mike Savage and Alan Milward for re-examination of causes and consequences of social change.

The final chapter will offer a concluding review of the research methods and findings, briefly exploring the key themes of Preston's wartime experience and the changes the war wrought to his sense of selfhood and towards his perception of British society.

CHAPTER 2 Methodology

2.1 *Approaching the Preston Diary*

My discovery of the Preston *Diary* was prompted by a recommendation from Dr Sidney Brown of the University of Maryland University College Europe, Harrogate[32] to look into the diary for the insight it offered into life on the Second World War home front. This recommendation followed an expression of interest on my part in the British/Yorkshire home front during Dr Brown's class on Yorkshire history wherein I had completed a research project on the Second World War in Yorkshire. Upon encountering the Preston *Diary*, the writing proved intriguing—in part, because it was felt that what was conveyed was at some variance with the popular memory of the war which had been encountered as a temporary transplant from the USA to the UK, from 2007 to 2011, through television and radio programmes, museum exhibits, and war-themed weekends. Yet the *Diary* was more intriguing still because of the high degree of personal testimony and reflection the diarist offered towards his experience on the home front as a schoolmaster, local volunteer, husband, and father in Keighley, West Yorkshire. It became clear that beyond the physical aspects of his efforts on the home front, there was a great deal of emotional negotiation involved in Kenneth Preston's home front experience which would be entirely unapparent by looking at the manifest record of his involvement in the war effort. For a record of his explicit behaviour would appear to show an entirely unconflicted, willing citizen by his perfect attendance and seemingly ready participation in Home Guard, his dedication to serving servicemen on leave through the charity Toc H, his contribution to the activities at his work consequent of the conflict, and his conformity with wartime regulations. However, it became clear that Preston's interaction with the war effort was informed much more by personal beliefs than notions of citizenship promoted at the time, and that the impact of war was felt in direct ways at a personal level, as well as indirectly through the impact of the war on society.

Thus whilst the *Diary* does include very interesting information of the physical negotations of the wartime experience, focus in this study is given to what he revealed of the emotional dimensions of living through the conflict. As a diarist, Kenneth Preston was concerned not only to describe the situation as he

experienced and was aware of it, but to explore it in terms of why certain wartime phenomena interacted as they did within British society and with him as well. Indeed, though he often pondered the physical implications for the war upon his local environs and societal landscape more generally, he was perhaps more keenly interested in the immaterial—the human implications, the relationship wartime phenomena had with certain values, and of what societal changes were indicative.

The presence given in the *Diary* to the emotional landscape and the individual's own emotional response was again at odds with my encounters with wartime memorabilia and the cultural memory of the war which highlighted the various physical elements of the home front such as 'Make Do and Mend', 'Dig for Victory', the evacuation and, of course, the Blitz. The personal testimony of the evolving emotional response to war offered a more nuanced portrait of the war than wartime memorabilia and discourse, which convey a near unanimous narrative of the wartime experience as one characterized primarily by social solidarity and popular support for Prime Minister Winston Churchill.[33] The diary offered the opportunity to explore the home front beyond the physical aspects of living through wartime Britain, and beyond popular conceptions of the war portrayed at the time and used more recently to explore the home front.

During the research the noteworthy degree to which Preston testified of his own subjective experience was underlined by several sources. Richard Hoggart tells us: 'Most people of whatever social class, are simply not, at any time, going to be interested in general ideas. What can be adapted, translated into their own terms, is adapted and translated. What cannot be, is ignored.'[34] According to sociologist Arlie Russell Hochschild, honest introspection is not a given attribute, often: 'glances inward at subjective feelings are fleeting and blurred'.[35] Hochschild adds that the: 'human capacity for, if not the actual habit of, reflecting on and shaping inner feelings, [is] a habit itself distributed variously across time, age, class, and locale.'[36] Max Hastings makes a similar assertion of diarists. Although usually considered to be more reflective individuals by virtue of the fact that they are maintaining a diary at all, Hastings asserts that it is, nevertheless, often the case that:

> Contemporary diaries and letters record what people did or what was done to them, but often tell us little about what they thought; the latter is more interesting, but more elusive....only a small minority have the emotional energy for reflection, because they are absorbed in their immediate physical surroundings, needs and desires.[37]

Thus whilst Preston's wartime experience could not perhaps be deemed remarkable—he remained a schoolmaster for the duration of the war—the testimony he gave of his experience of the home front in the *Diary* was felt to be worthy of academic scrutiny because of Preston's consciousness of himself in the world and his desire to explore his position and the world around him in his diary writing. In contemplating his understandings of society, he gave presence to wider norms and values, making the *Diary* a source which vividly ties together the impact of the war upon the individual, the small-scale elements of community life, and much wider events and phenomena across British society.

2.2 *Aims*

Given the degree of insight allowed by the diarist, the aim of the research was to discover the experience not in terms of the materiality or physicality of wartime life, but rather to discover the experience as the diarist specifically felt it—to render what it was that was meaningful to Kenneth Preston of his wartime experience, and to explain why it was so, and furthermore, to explore what were the implications of his understandings upon his wartime experience and larger state of being. This involved taking a qualitative, source led approach to the research in order to explore an individual's lived experience of the Second World War with the intent of discovering and elucidating the participant's meaning making. Thus the purpose became to explore Preston's beliefs and understandings in order to discover not only what views the diarist actually held, but what informed those views, how they interacted with Preston's sense of self, and how they interacted with his involvement with events and phenomena throughout the war. Examination here of how Preston's perceptions impacted his interaction with the world, and how his perceptions allowed for the world to impact him, is in line with the concept of 'perception theory' as developed by Douglas Pocock and Ray Hudson, which places emphasis on: 'the subjective manner of construing reality' and 'the relevance to personal and social life and behaviour of...mental representations, rather than those of objective realities'.[38]

In looking to explore the understandings Preston held of his experience, it strongly accorded with Claire Langhamer's assertion regarding the importance of attending to the reality of how historical actors themselves actually felt, and not just what was given presence in public discourse. Of this, Langhamer states:

> We need to attend to the meanings which historical actors themselves assign to emotions such as love and crucially, to the work which these emotions actually do, and are held to have done, within individual lives and social worlds at any particular historical moment.[39]

This study seeks to emphasise the use of selfhood as an analytical framework wherein meanings and behaviour are given greater coherence through the context of a lived life. Emphasis is given to locating what informed Preston's understandings, thus illuminating more clearly why and how those understandings interacted as they did with wartime phenomena. This study similarly finds agreement with Keith Thomas's point that: 'social change can be regarded as a process of mental reclassification, of re-drawing conceptual lines and boundaries',[40] and consequently seeks to pursue where and how the war interacted with Preston's perceptions so as to affect 'mental reclassification' and 're-drawing of conceptual lines and boundaries'. In exploring Preston, a parallel aim emerged which is to illustrate the richness of considering privately held perceptions of wartime individuals in addition to cultural products and explicit conduct (such as records of civilian defence participation).

The aims therefore include exploration of the possibilities for the impact of the Second World War upon the individual life, and to locate the understandings and perceptions surrounding that impact beyond what can be read in cultural products or explicit conduct through exploration of the subjective experience of the war. In so doing, this study hopes to make a contribution to the literature of the Second World War home front and acknowlege the value of selfhood as an analytical lens to the past.

2.3 *Research Questions*

In seeking to discover the salient aspects of Preston's experience, the research took a source oriented approach in order to allow the historical actor's beliefs and perceptions to come to the fore. This is an approach which contrasts with

seeking to discover particular evidence or data towards predesigned research questions, or where the research is approached with a particular agenda in mind, as has been done with some diary sources in the past, such as in the treatment of Richard Brown's diary. Brown's diary was edited with the stated intent of dispelling 'revisionist histories'.[41] Consequently, the questions initially put to the Preston *Diary* were open ended, consisting of the following: 'How did Preston understand his experience? ', 'What was the changing impact of the war upon Preston as the conflict progressed?' and 'How did Preston's perceptions interact with societal phenomena during the war?' Initially this was examined in terms of identity which was conceived of consisting of self, community, and nation and his perceptions of each as discrete categories. In time, selfhood emerged as a more appropriate focus as it encompassed the elements of his identity and allowed for concepts of community and nation to be incorporated as appropriate. With this, the research question crystallized into a single line of enquiry: 'How did the war and Kenneth Preston's selfhood interact?' Community and nation were recognised as important elements of selfhood, affecting the makeup of one's identity and one's perception of oneself in the world. Thus community and nation, as well as other categories, were not looked at as ends in themselves, but were examined in terms of the role they played within Preston's sense of selfhood during the Second World War.

2.4 *Findings*

As Preston's understanding of, and interaction with, wartime phenomena began to be apprehended, the research found agreement with and subsequent support for Anthony Elliott's assertion that: 'the lived experience of identity is mysteriously contradictory.'[42] Without the diary to offer fuller insight into Preston's wartime experience, his motives and intentions could be easily misconstrued. Subsequently, this study contests the placing of citizenship as the principal source of motivation for, and interpretative lens to explore, the population's understandings and interaction with the home front: most people do not experience life with citizenship or national identity as the foremost category in their negotiation of situations or their analysis of others around them. However, due to recent public debates over citizenship and national identity, notions of citizenship and national identity during the Second World

War have increasingly been taken up by historians. Furthermore, this study finds agreement with Hinton that notions of collective identity embodied in particular traits or behaviours were far more fragile than public rhetoric might suggest.[43]

In placing selfhood as the interpretative nexus of individuals in their world, this study posits that much can be gained from privately held perceptions at the time. In writing of his own life, Preston also shed light on issues such as the place of women in society, class, codes of conduct, religion and value orientation, the increasing faith he perceived in scientific and scientific expertise, and support for central planning and welfare. His understanding of these topics can be found, in some cases and to varying extents, to have been understood differently than conclusions explained by analysis of cultural products or explicit conduct. As Hinton's examination asserts, the reality of the lived experience: 'provide[s] a valuable reality check on the tendency...to elide stylized public exhortatory discourse with the actual mentalities of real people.'[44]

2.5 *Selfhood as an Analytical Lens*

Selfhood was chosen then as an analytical lens to examine Preston's subjective wartime experience because it was found to be the most useful framework by which to explore Preston's experience *as it meant to him*. Examination of selfhood, as will be shown here, allows for the emotional and personal impact of the conflict to be rendered in some cases more accurately and more fully than other forms of analysis of wartime individuals.

Selfhood is understood here as the integration of intrapersonal and physical entities of being. Additionally, the intrapersonal element of a being encompasses and integrates three psychological perspectives which are listed here according to philosopher Kim Atkins: 'a first-personal psychological perspective; a second-personal relationship perspective, and third-personal objective perspective.' Importantly, this relates to a narrative model of selfhood, as narrative, states Atkins: 'provides the means to unify the first-, second-, and third-personal aspects of human selfhood because it deploys strategies that integrate different characters, actors, motives, places, events, perspectives, and even different orders of time.'[45]

Within this, two critical features were recognised, the first being the degree to which individual selfhood was realised, or, in other words, the degree to which the individual had formed an agential identity or realised themselves as an agent in their own self realisation. Secondly, it was felt critical to ask how that agency, in as much as it was realised, was negotiated in the social context to which the individual belonged. These considerations are important because of the recognition here that the individual is not always a fully realised being and in as much as one does not realise their agency, they are not free to act autonomously in all circumstances. Similarly, the individual must negotiate one's selfhood through situations, which at times are not full expressions of one's desires. Thus, whilst selfhood is accessible to the historian through examination of how a historical actor: 'orients, or presents himself first-personally',[46] it was recognised throughout examination for this study that: 'how one presents oneself first-personally rests on facts about one's cognitive, emotional, and social condition, and one's sensitivity to these facts', as philosopher Marina Oshana tells us.[47] So whilst the social was considered as an integral part of understanding Preston's selfhood—to varying extents the culture one is a part of serves as a latent horizon in which social mores and customs influence and/or shape attitudinal and behavioural understandings—it was seen as equally important to ascertain the degree to which the individual recognised his ability or realised his options of how to respond to the various stimuli he encountered within society.

In addition to agreement with the integration of intrapersonal and physical entities of being in the narrative understanding of selfhood, use of the narrative understanding of selfhood here is also due to agreement with the narrative quality of the formation and development of selfhood over time. According to proponents, narrative is relevant to selfhood because of the individual's inherent connection to his or her past, and the formation of understandings in relation to those past experiences. According to Atkins: 'these early life experiences set up psychological, affective, physical, agential, and moral structures that tie us inextricably to others throughout our lives.' 'For this reason,' Atkins asserts: 'questions about who I am and how I should live need to be addressed in the context of an interpersonal, cultural, and historical setting.'[48] Narrative selfhood takes shape over time through use and integration of our three perspectives

(first-personal psychological, second-personal relationship, and third-personal objective) into complex composite sets of what Atkins phrases: ‘subdescriptions pertaining to one’s physical and psychological abilities (and inabilities), occupation, ethnicity, gender, relations of family and friendships, religious and political convictions, and so on.’[49] In narrative understandings of selfhood, specific characteristics, including behaviours, beliefs, values, dispositional traits, competencies, physical qualities, and interrelations become ‘primary to a person’. ‘Primacy’, states Oshana: ‘is marked by the fact that these characteristics guide practical deliberation, act as the anchor for general ends and values, frame motives for action and a person’s manner of presentation, influence public transactions (notably, the manner in which a person is classified and treated), and exhibit heightened salience’.[50]

However, it was recognised that there are questions over the ethicality of a conception of selfhood composed in the social context which can result in a: ‘strong tendency toward conventionality’, where: ‘powerful conservative social forces could arbitrarily determine that only certain types of self-narrative can count as socially and morally valuable.’[51] Michel Foucault, for instance, argued against the narrative self-interpretation model as being: ‘part of a disciplinary culture with its roots in the “ashes and sackcloth” tradition of the Christian church.’[52]

Yet, agreement is found here with the narrative model in line with what scholars understand to be a critical facility enabled to the individual through narrative self-understanding. Furthermore, the: ‘emancipatory effects’ of ‘counternarratives that expose the epistemic rigging and hidden arbitrariness of “master narratives” ’,[53] have been duly acknowledged in regard to the justification here of the application of narrative understandings of selfhood in respect to Kenneth Preston. This is considered particularly relevant to a discussion of modern selfhood, where the flow of information available to the individual was exponentially higher and more obtainable than in previous ages. Furthermore, another considerable aspect lies in the discursive ability allowed to the individual based on a number of factors, such as education and residential mobility. In relation to this it is particularly notable for purposes of examination here that as middle-class male, Preston was a member of a

category that according to Judith Howard, has traditionally had the: ‘discursive power to define, locate and order others’ and the ‘freedom to define themselves as specific unique individuals’.[54]

Moreover, the use of a narrative conception of selfhood here takes into consideration the self-reflexivity (first-personal, psychological perspective) of the historical actor.[55] This involved questioning the degree to which an individual can and does honestly examine oneself and his or her relation and response towards phenomena and can, therefore, be counted as a self-governing agent. Preston, because of his highly reflective and observant nature, was determined to be a reliable self-governing agent in that he valued accuracy, and was disposed to orient himself in such a way that a candid picture of himself emerged despite the risk that the portrait might have been unbecoming and even ‘physically painful’.[56]

It is however crucial that, as Oshana qualifies, even if an individual misunderstands their situation and/or is limited in their agential identity, self-conceptions are nevertheless crucial to thought and action and thus lend: ‘form to people’s way of looking at and representing themselves.’[57] Oshana continues: ‘In deliberating about what to do, we employ premises that consist of beliefs and desires about the contemplated action. These beliefs and desires offer reasons for action of either a description or explanatory nature.’[58] To an extent then, the self-awareness of the person, or lack thereof, does not affect or diminish from the examiner being able to ascertain, through close reading, the understandings and perceptions behind a person’s behaviour and attitudes. Close reading involves: ‘extracting meaning “against the grain of the documentation” ’[59] and being: ‘receptive to what it is that the writer is unconsciously conveying’.[60]

Another of the arguments against narrative use of selfhood taken into consideration here concerns the: ‘metaphysical implications of narrative selfhood’, as Atkins describes it. These implications include arguments that narrative selfhood relies: ‘upon a practical and first-personal form of continuity: continuity in one’s concerns about survival, moral responsibility, compensation, and self-interested concern.’ Another implication, as one scholar sees it, is that the narrative view: ‘is the simply false descriptive thesis that an individual

understands herself as a ‘self’ which exists distinct from her existence as a human being.’[61] To answer both of the arguments outlined above: this study stresses the practical rather than the metaphysical elements of selfhood which emphasizes, in agreement with Atkins and Christine Korsgaard, the: ‘agential and relational character of reflective self-awareness’, and seeks to: ‘avoid the suggestion of an entity existing apart from the acting and suffering human being.’[62] It is the integration and unification of the three distinct but related perspectives addressed above (first-personal psychological perspective, second-personal relational, and third-personal objective), and the unity therein of intrapersonal and physical entities of being which, in combination with an appreciation for the relationship of the individual with their past, present and future projections, that the narrative model asserts the individual draws upon when asking themselves who they are and how they should live. Thus the narrative model was chosen here because of its holistic consideration of the human experience—a person cannot, even if desired, be entirely free of their past selves, psychological/emotional selves, physical selves, or their social context, but instead these are elements which are inherent to the human experience and as such must be taken into consideration in exploring the individual.

2.6 *Context*

In order to appropriately explore Preston’s narrative selfhood, the anthropological technique of ‘thick description’ was employed, which required placing Preston’s perceptions and behavior in the context of his own life and the times in which he lived.[63] In so doing, a micro-history, or micro-narrative to be more specific, emerged, wherein it was recognised that the: ‘macro and micro were interwoven lenses of perspective and not spheres’.[64] This allowed the individual, or small scale, to shed light on the larger scale in line with Tosh’s assertion of the gains possible from focused examination.[65] Contextual research was done at both the local and national levels, taking in such topics as gender, religious belief, class, and politics. Biographical details and examples of earlier writing were also researched, including the life writing, essays and short stories deposited at Keighley Local History Library and WYAS Bradford. Examination was also conducted into the intellectual history of the times, the debates and

concerns, as well as literary, academic, and social phenomena, especially those with which Preston would have had the most contact, such as the atmosphere at Oxford University, the 'crisis of civilisation', religious debates, contestation and developments within the literary world, and community involvement.[66] Contextual research was done with an intent to better locate and explore the impact of the war upon the personal dimension of Preston's experience—religious beliefs, fears, anxieties, hopes, as well attitudes towards society—in short, his personal understandings and perceptions which could not be determined by simply evaluating his environment alone.

Considerations and insights relevant to selfhood from the fields of philosophy, sociology, and anthropology were incorporated into the historical methodology.[67] Works from these fields enhanced insight into Preston's reactions, motives, and perceptions towards himself and society, yet, whilst considerations from mutliple fields were used to elucidate Preston's feelings and perceptions, analysis here is contextually grounded in the circumstances and wartime experiences of Kenneth Preston. This approach allowed for better understanding of the negotiation of selfhood in Preston's movements through wartime life. It is hoped that methodological breadth will not be confused with arbitrariness or unreflective eclecticism.

2.7 *Representativeness*

Important to the aims and methodology of this study is that there was no intent to pursue the argument that Preston was representative of the whole of society, or even a certain segment of it, such as middle-class males. Indeed, Preston's own diary writing shows a plurality of views within just his social milieu. Nor is it the purpose to replace one narrative with another. It is the intent here to contribute to historical appreciation of how the Second World War was experienced by the British civilian. Exploration of Kenneth Preston's experience and interpretation of the home front is meant to illuminate his life-world, which does of course necessarily entail more than merely himself and so does offer some insight into the wider environs of which he was a part. Preston also gives some presence to how abstractions and ideas circulating publicly were appropriated by the individual. Furthermore, as Hinton has shown, despite the world shaking events of the war, people were still living private lives, and

interested, therefore, to develop and explore their own sense of selfhood. Indeed, the war raised questions and presented some opportunity to re-evaluate oneself on a number of levels. The critical question throughout this study concerns *perception*, what caused one thought or understanding to take the path it did, or hold the weight that it did? Why did Preston perceive self-fulfilment in some ways and not others? Why did he feel a sense of belonging during the war with some groups and not others? Whilst these questions are asked in regard to Preston, these are not questions in a void, but are part of the wider wartime experience of British society.

2.8 *The Diary as a Historical Source*

The diary source is particularly functional for analysis of selfhood because presentation of self, whether consciously or not, reveals how the individual orients themselves and therein reveals facts about their: 'cognitive, emotional and social condition'.[68] Even if the diarist bares and cloaks themselves then, whether it be wittingly or not, they nevertheless expose a great deal simply by revealing what they hold to be worthy of stylizing themselves as, a phenomenon Hinton describes as where the self fashioning is on show.[69] Additionally, the diary can capture the experience as it was felt at the time, which in many, indeed most, cases differs greatly from recollections through oral histories and memoirs composed many years after the experience itself.

Whilst it was felt that Preston represented himself as honestly as he understood, it is important to note that the diary source was not taken as a transparent window to the soul. Caution was taken to not place analysis in the face-value school of biography and perceive the research subject merely as he saw himself, though his self-conceptions were important for certain purposes as discussed above. Moreover, it was important to question the motives of the individual for maintaining a diary—was the diarist planning to use the diary for a future purpose, such as an autobiography or as the basis of a novel or a history of the times? Similarly, such elements of diary writing as presentation/projection of the diarist were also taken into consideration.

2.9 *Diarist Motivation*

Because of the critical function motives serve in diary writing, this was an area which was given thorough consideration. It was determined that Preston's inclination to begin the *Diary* stemmed primarily from the tremendous degree to which he engaged with the written word: it shaped his life and it shaped his critical stance towards life's events. When faced with the emotional and physical tumult of the war, Preston turned to the written word to give him a sense of coherence and stability in an increasingly incoherent and instable world. During the war he faced feelings and circumstances he admitted he could not fully grasp. There was also a significant increase in the presence of the outside world into the lives of individuals during the conflict and there was an endless stream of commentary both overtly and covertly extolling certain conceptions and values. Thus the war not only came into people's lives physically as a result of the government and other organisation's direction, but it also entered the mental sphere of people's lives. Preston was not inclined to simply going along with things—to passively accept the guidance of outside influences or receive societal notions as presented to him—and he was deeply agitated by outside attempts to influence through subtle manipulation.

The critical thinking developed by his training in literary criticism, speech, and debate had taught him to consider things in the most careful of ways. Literary training had also taught him that language led to awareness, awareness to comprehension, and thus that if he could find the language to describe how he was feeling he could develop his consciousness of the situation and thus feel a sense of stability. In this way, the *Diary* acted like a form of Freud's 'talking therapy': it was a safe space, distanced from the world, to consider the circumstances with which he was faced and both retain and maintain a coherent sense of selfhood. As Charles Lemert describes: 'Freud's scheme [talking therapy]...does not sound like an identity theory. But it is, insofar as it radicalizes even so unruly a theme as perturbations caused by the social self....What Freud did was to call the social self what it was—a target of stimuli from the outer world; and those extend stimuli did not serve the needs of the ego.'[70]

The calming effect which writing had for Preston was initially important in the military uncertainty of early 1941. In those days, Preston frequently mentioned the concern and insecurity he felt towards what the future may hold, or where the next 'blow' would fall, as he put it.[71] Writing served as an outlet for fears, and seems to have steadied his thoughts. As Hinton suggests: 'putting oneself down on paper is a sign of composure.'[72] Moreover, writing helped him develop his thoughts and in this way, gain a feeling of coherence, which is of particular importance in trying times. As Alister McGrath describes:

> Recent works on human resilience in the face of trauma have emphasized the importance of sustaining a sense of coherence as a means of coping with seemingly senseless or irrational events, particularly those which involve suffering. As many such studies have suggested, the maintenance of sanity is often dependent on being able to sustain a 'sense of coherence' – for example, by discerning meaning with traumatic events, or controlling or repressing a sense of incoherence.[73]

Exploring events calmly and composedly through the written word, we see Preston pushing away a sense of incoherence, thus helping to keep his concerns from turning into debilitating anxiety. Yet, in time, a more creative fire emerged. He became less diplomatic and took ownership of the *Diary* as his space. He wrote more from his subjective perspective. Often this was in ventilating. In the wartime political and social climate, where a heightened sense of meaning was inferred in peoples' attitudes, a willingness to express one's views freely was inhibited. In this way, the war increased the disparity of his public and private self, and the *Diary* thus served to carry this extra burden of wartime life—writing was his chance to say what he recognised social settings would not allow him to say about the frustrations of wartime life and of the situation generally. The need to ventilate extended to the increasing issue he took with the wider intentions and motivations of human kind that would lead to such a disaster as the war to occur for a second time in his life. He was interested to look also at the direction of society and the shape of things to come. He came also to locate sources of tension in his own life and society generally and consider the relationships of various phenomena. Also, simply putting down his thoughts on paper seemed to ease tension. At one point, for example, he wrote a letter to his mother over her interferences with his son in connection with wartime shortages which had caused him considerable

frustration.[74] Although he did not send the letter, the writing of it seemed to lessen the frustration he felt over the situation.

However, the *Diary* was not a receptacle for tension only, he used the *Diary* also as a place to express his innermost joys and delights. Moreover, he clearly found pleasure in capturing feeling in words. At times, he indulged his creativity and immersed himself in describing certain situations joining often very vivid imagery with the feelings induced and/or insight he gained from a particular scene or situation he experienced.

Thus, Preston used to the *Diary* to 'commune' with his thoughts in order to go beyond the superficial quality of events to better understand them, and remarkably also, his own responses to them. He explored and analysed down to the very motivations of the individual to account for and explore various aspects of why society was as he perceived it to be. He also placed himself under his own microscope, and the diary was a place to explore his inner self. As mentioned above, he was interested in his own responses to wartime phenomena, however, the war also coincided with questions Preston was putting to himself about his own motivations and ambitions as an individual outside of the wartime context. He was dealing with realities his younger self had not assumed about the limits of selfhood imposed by the social and professional world, a world he increasingly saw being reshaped by new norms and values, and with which he felt increasingly at odds.

In the research for this study, it has become apparent that Preston shares several distinct characteristics with those of better-known diarists of the world. For instance, he used diary writing as a positive expression of self-discipline as did Walter Scott, as a medium through which to observe the world as Francis Bacon encouraged, to more freely express innermost feelings as Sonya Sontag, and as a mental exercise and creative joy as Samuel Pepys. Preston, going into his forties at the commencement of the diary, worried about his mental acuity. The diary trained him to keep track of his thoughts, and, as with Pepys and other diarists, facilitated a love of learning evidenced elsewhere also.[75] This was clear perhaps most in his position as an English master. He took his work as an opportunity to perpetually educate himself; he did not use the same lessons

repeatedly but instead spent his summers, nights, and weekends reading and reviewing material to put together new lectures and exams. He also took his personal reading as a challenge to continually take new ideas into consideration, including those being advanced at the time, which would seem to be at odds with his own tastes and attitudes. He also enjoyed having a place to write of his views of what he read. Finally, like other diarists, Preston seemed to have a sense that something, a certain amount of potential, was within him and hoped that writing would, perhaps, help unlock or reveal his creative energy.

However, Preston's motivation as a diarist also differed in important ways from many other diarists in that he does not appear have kept the diary with a specific purpose for future use in mind. In keeping it for his own personal sense of wellbeing, Preston presents himself as quite rare amongst male diarists for whom motivation to keep a diary has traditionally been almost entirely for the purpose of utilising it at a later date for professional use, mainly as an *aide-memoire*. Unlike other literary men, Preston did not, by all indications, intend to ever use his diary as source material for future work, as did for instance George Orwell[76] and Arthur Conan Doyle.[77] Nor did he maintain it with an eye for future publication, as is often the case with politicians and other public figures, as Alan Bennett and Alastair Campbell who regularly publish extracts of their diaries. This is attested to in that he did not alter or amend any part of it, neither are any pages missing, nor, to anyone's knowledge, did he ever seek to have it published. His speculation over the interest the diary would hold to the outside world ventured only so far as to posit that someday maybe he and his wife might find it amusing to look back upon and that perhaps some future family members might be interested in what 'great great grandfather thought'.[78] However, it appears he never let the diary out of his possession and never really intended it as a source for his posterity to learn of him. The diary stayed in Preston's possession until he and his wife moved to a care home for the elderly. At that time, he agreed with his son that the diary be put in the care of the West Yorkshire Archive Service, Bradford, along with other life writings, correspondences, fictional and essay writing, and notes from his training with Home Guard. Additionally, his papers and other documents regarding service with Toc H were deposited at the Keighley Local History Library.[79]

Moreover, that the diary was not intended for publication is also attested to in that it was a place to work through his inner-most thoughts. It was in his interest to be candid—it was a psychological necessity—unlike other forms of writing, such as letters, wherein one is portraying oneself for others. He could not therefore have had it simultaneously in mind that the diary would serve as his private space and that it would someday be exposed to the world. The personal connection he felt towards the writing in the diary is evident in that the diary came to accompany him nearly everywhere he went, and on occasion he wrote twice throughout the same day.

However, his personal connection towards the diary certainly did not preclude consideration of how he presented himself in his writing. Someone so self-conscious, and with such an appreciation for literary style as Preston could not have abandoned awareness altogether of how he was presenting himself on paper. To an extent he acknowledged this, writing at one time: 'To write is always to rave a little. Style is the thing that's always a bit phony, and at the same time you cannot write without style'.[80] Furthermore, he wrote that he did not feel he could represent himself to his satisfaction in the diary, describing: 'The obligation to write it is all in one's own eye, and look how one is when it's almost always written—upstairs, late, overwrought, alone. This is applicable in my case.'[81]

Yet it is argued here that projection in the diary was necessarily limited by virtue of the fact that he wrote every day, sometimes twice a day. Whilst he could take a few minutes to collect his thoughts, he was too busy to linger or formulate very much. Also, as mentioned above, Preston felt the need of a space to be open and honest. What revisions to the sentiment he expressed was only that which took place to his changes in thinking over time. Nothing was rewritten, cut out or blacked out. Given that multiple days' entries were usually on the same page and that both the front and back of the page were used, it would have been very tedious to have rewritten entries, as he would have had to have rewritten other day's entries as well. Thus it seems the possibility for rewriting was virtually nil. Whilst he does often provide justification for his point of view, he does not make a concerted effort to paint himself overly positively. Although the social mores at the time to which he adhered can be seen to have encouraged at least the appearance of a certain amount of humility, it is also

clear that Preston scorned mental dishonesty. His own ego was not immune to his queries, and he held his views “to the fire”, causing him, in some instances, to reconsider his perceptions. He also admitted to failings, both in specific instances, as when he spoke too harshly to a co-worker, as well as in a personal sense, in the way of his own character flaws and other personal attributes. He discussed his failings as he saw them on multiple instances: his inability to capture into words his impressions so as to create a literary work, what he called his ‘diffidence’, his lack of education, his lack of foreign travel, and his shyness (what he felt was the product of an over heightened sense of modesty his mother impressed upon him in his youth).[82]

In treating the diary as a historical source the need was recognised to go beyond the presentation of self by the diarist, to instead expand upon the negotiation of selfhood presented in the diary and to explore the world-view Preston held. In looking for meaning beyond the immediate wording of the text, attention was given towards such elements of the diarist’s writing as the unspoken codes of self-presentation to which Preston adhered, as well as to the implications of those codes. In this way, the reading of the diary was informed by what has been termed ‘the linguistic turn’, which brings attention much more fully to the role of language in the construction of one’s perception of reality, and to the multi-layered nature of experience. Thus, much of Preston’s selfhood was detected in what was implicitly represented as well as that which was explicitly stated. For instance, at times, his tone and the presence of certain topics revealed more than his explicit discussion of those topics. This was seen in his avoidance of the intimate, indicating he found it uncomfortable or inappropriate to write of such things especially if he imagined even for an instant that a future family member may read it. Yet that he made happenstance mention of intimacy between he and his wife, such as introducing a discussion had between the two of them by including that they were lying in bed whilst the discussion took place, reveals that Preston and his wife shared a physically and emotionally intimate space. Moreover that this should warrant mention in the diary shows a value attachment to what he and his wife discussed as intimates as well as consideration of her point of view, thus giving presence to the importance of the relationship in his life and as an important element of selfhood for Preston.[83]

The importance of the implicit in analysis of the diary was also recognised in the way Preston positioned himself in certain situations, and the ways he felt were appropriate to perceive societal intercourse, and express opinion of it. For instance, he wrote of his boss's rudeness as being against the codes of gentlemanly conduct, when it is clear his displeasure was a result of feeling personally insulted by his boss, yet, he felt it more appropriate to portray the situation as one wherein social codes had been affronted, rather than him personally or in a way that touched on his own emotions. Therefore whilst much was gained through the explicit discussion Preston offers, the circumstance and tone implicit in that same discussion were also taken to be revealing. As mentioned previously, in addition to the conventions and rules of self-representation, analysis also took into account the perceptions of selfhood available to the historical actor as well as consideration of the analytical abilities of the actor.

2.10 *Considering Researcher Bias*

During the research of historical methodology for the purposes of this study, appreciation was gained for the possibility of bias on my part to affect the line of historical enquiry undertaken and the findings concluded, thus, underlining the need for researcher self-awareness. Tosh draws attention to this by encouraging the historian to:

> scrutinize his or her own assumptions and values in order to see how they relate to the enquiry in hand....awareness is particularly important in the case of those historians who have no particular axe to grind but can all too easily be the unconscious vector of values taken for granted by people of their own background. This is one reason why, as emphasized by [Theodore] Zeldin, self-knowledge is a desirable trait among historians—and also why the confessional mode of historical writings should be welcomed, at least in the author's preface or introduction.[84]

Thus in exploring Preston's subjective experience, awareness was maintained not to impose hierarchies of significance or serve as an: 'unconscious vector of values', as in focusing unduly on notions such as citizenship and national identity as lenses by which to explore his experience. Exploring Preston's experience in this way would perhaps have been more in line with dominant trends in historical treatment of the war. However, focus on these categories would have been at the expense of taking into consideration such factors as

religious and artistic beliefs, which were considerable factors in his wartime experience.

A related, but nevertheless distinct, concern in my treatment of the research subject was the avoidance of attempting to put myself in the place of the individual under examination. Doing so—putting oneself in the "shoes" of the research subject—seemed almost a possibility at points, as Tosh tells us: 'not all the past is exotic....we may encounter patterns of thinking or behaviour that are immediately accessible to us'.[85] However, it was deemed that similarities and seeming accessibility of entering into the research subject's position was illusory, as sociologist James Aho tells us:

> empathy is not sufficient to explain knowledge of others' minds….This is because it already presupposes such knowledge….perhaps the gravest weakness of orthodoxy, namely, that if it is true, then empathisers are in essence convening not with each other, but with their own projections. Because each infers the others' intentions only after reflecting on what it would mean to himself for herself were he or she to act this way, then there can be no true meeting of minds. Mutual understanding in any but a superficial sense is logically precluded.[86]

Thus, despite seeming similarities and tempting possibilities to perceive the situations and feelings presented in the diary as relatable, the approach was taken instead to treat the research subject's feelings and emotions as having been, as Tosh describes: 'founded on quite different premises from our own.'[87] And similarly to acknowledge the: 'vast differences in social values, priorities, and context', as R. Keith Schoppa states.[88] Consequently, a theoretical participant-observer relationship was undertaken where I avoided inserting my own rationale and sought instead to discover the rationale of the historical actor as in anthropological studies. Additionally, conclusions, correlations, and the formation of arguments were suspended for a considerable amount of time whilst research was conducted. The diary was read in its entirety on three separate occasions parallel to other research into the life and times of Preston before research was consolidated and arguments were formed.

Interestingly, the research subject drew attention to the way interpretation could be affected by one's own perception, positing for instance that understandings of the war would be rewritten by successive generations due to the distortion of memory.[89] The Preston *Diary* also draws attention to the mistakenness of

assuming that history has progressed along inevitable lines by pointing to the multiplicity of possibilities in envisioning as Preston did that Britain and other societies would take a much different direction during and after the war than occurred. He thus highlighted that the ways and values of society transition into being and that the way things are now did not follow a predestined course. This was underlined during the research by the notion asserted by Alan Trachtenberg that:

> Certain forms of culture or collective consciousness put questions to those who live within them, questions whose answers are normally taken for granted at a level of behaviour so deep that we are hardly aware of the enigmas buried in them....Approaching the commonplace and the familiar as if it were strange and enigmatic is to melt the protective stonelike armature, to reveal the provisional and arbitrary character of all human constructions...The aim of interrogation is to dispel the apparition of tranquillity and to reveal how unsettled, how agitated with unanswered questions is our common life.[90]

Another notable aspect of seeking to let the diary text speak for itself was to avoid forming an understanding of Preston through others' opinions of him, including Preston's family members, former pupils, or others who had examined the diary.[91] This was in order that the study of Preston would remain based in his own understandings and perceptions as revealed in the diary text, his other writings, and other material from his life which were read in conjunction with secondary and primary research into the times.

Throughout the research awareness of researcher bias and influence allowed the diary text to take pre-eminence in pointing the research towards those areas which are focused upon here. Awareness also made possible the realisation and application of the appropriate standards of significance in order to properly explore and present Preston's experience within the context of British society and cultural framework in which it was experienced. That this is true is spoken to in that in pursuing those areas which Preston highlighted I discovered things it was not known could be discovered, which led to conclusions I on my own could not have conceived.

CHAPTER 3 Literature Review

3.1 *The Place of the Study within Historical Enquiry*

This study is situated within a social and cultural approach to history. It seeks to 'get into the mind of the past'[92] by discovering the perspectives, attitudes and understandings of an ordinary person, Kenneth Preston. It seeks to reconstruct the motives he had for interacting as he did with the Second World War. However, no study can be solely focused on an individual. Rather, it is the aim to place the research subject's thinking in its historical context, and locate his reception of ideas circulating on the home front. As a micro-narrative, it integrates examination of the individual with his environs and, as John Tosh describes: 'fills out in small-scale and human detail some of the social and cultural features that are otherwise known only as generalizations.'[93] It takes into consideration discrete categories, such as Preston's voluntary activities, religious involvement, sociability, domesticity, civilian defence participation, and political views, however, these categories are not studied as ends in themselves, but rather the idea was to discover how they combined as a whole experience.

The work here joins in a broad sense many works reanalyzing major aspects of social change during the era of the Second World War, and more specifically it joins a more limited, but growing, number of works concerned with how the era was *experienced* from a subjective point of view and to what consequence was the evolving emotional response of past people. Moreover, it joins just a handful of works, including James Hinton's *Nine Wartime Lives* and Penny Summerfield's *Reconstructing Women's Wartime Lives*, focused on the role of the subjective experience within larger processes of wartime social change. Furthermore, it joins those works which use personal testimony to illuminate and explore meanings held at the time in order to rediscover meanings and understandings held by the wider wartime populace. These works include those by Hinton and Summerfield mentioned above, as well as those by Wendy Ugolini (*Experiencing War as the Enemy Other*),[94] Alan Allport (*Browned Off and Bloody Minded*),[95] and Tony Kusher (*We Europeans?*).[96]

The approach here is to build from the inside out, to discover how a person felt, and importantly to what longer term processes of change were the emotional

responses of the individual connected. In taking a middle-class male from the north of England as its focus it further defines itself as a contribution to the literature of the Second World War home front.

Fundamental to this study is that attitudes are not measured by popular cultural products, public commentators, or state officials. Rather, this work, like the few others it joins in the most specific sense, seeks to locate and elucidate the feelings and perceptions of a historical actor as they were understood by the historical actor himself. The pioneering approach of such a methodology is apparent in the opening lines of Hinton's *Nine Wartime Lives*, wherein Hinton describes similar examination of the experience of several Mass-Observation diarists as an 'experiment of historiography'.[97] Hinton considers his analysis of the home front an 'experiment' not only in that it takes as its goal the discovery of how a few people felt, but because he goes directly to the individual (via their wartime diaries) to discover their own subjective views. Hinton then integrates those views with the wider cultural situation to elucidate the emotional landscape of the home front in the most revealing of ways. In a similar way, Summerfield's analysis nearly two decades prior to Hinton's, using oral history and concerned mainly with women's subjective experience, broke new ground in seeking to shed light on the interior dimensions of the war's impact to the individual and how that impact shaped not only the individual's interaction with the war, but how it interacted with their longer term sense of self.[98] In Ugolini's recent study, the subjective experience of the Italian Scottish is explored through personal testimony with an aim of acknowledging a greater variety in the views of Italian Scots during the war according to age and gender than has previously been presented of the Italian Scottish wartime experience. Allport used a large degree of personal source materials in order to better explore the experience of the war from the soldiers' perspective and ask how and why they fought. Kushner's use of personal source materials was in the form of Mass Observation responses, which was in order to explore changing racial attitudes during the twentieth century.

Whilst Hinton's, Summerfield's, Allport's, Ugolini's, and Kushner's works are distinct in their concerns for the interaction of the subjective experience with the wider home front and war situation, they are representative of only one area of

a variety of the works which are concerned with re-evaluating the home front, the new angles by which re-analysis is being taken, and the questions driving that analysis.[99] Indeed, looking anew at correlations between wartime society, wartime phenomena, and the causes of social change is a prominent concern raised in the works of several historians of the period of the two world wars,[100] and the twentieth-century more generally,[101] the need for which was illustrated in the dedication of an entire recent issue of *Cultural and Social History* to articles concerned with the topic.[102]

3.2 *Early Academic Histories of the Home Front*

As concerns the Second World War home front in particular, the need for reassessment stems from several factors. Firstly, reassessment is needed in part due to the treatment applied to the war by early historians. Prominent amongst this generation of historians were two overarching factors which contributed to their treatment of the war, beginning with a lack of attention to research of primary sources and towards research methodology more generally. The majority of the historians of the post-war period were Oxbridge educated and A.J.P. Taylor biographer Kathleen Burke asserts that Oxbridge: 'did not particularly encourage…specialization or training in sources and methods for original research.' Students of Taylor's generation, therefore, read history books, but did not: 'learn how to "do" history.'[103] This could partially account for Taylor's decisive, but sometimes incomplete, conclusions, such as: 'From the middle of 1942 onwards the health of the nation showed a steady, striking improvement. No one knows why.'[104]

The other area of concern prompting reassessment of the early histories of the war stems from the relationship and/or proximity of those early historians with the war. Because many early historians of the home front were of the WWII generation or immediately thereafter, this disabled to some extent a critical perspective of events, which was compounded by the lack of official records available at the time.[105] This led to significant personal bias on the part of many early historians of the war according to several current scholars. For instance, Mark Donnelly notes that historians who had lived through the war: 'frequently emphasised the heroic nature of the war effort and identified the conflict as a turning point in British history.'[106] This is seen for instance in Winston Churchill's

six-volume series, one of the first histories of the war published, which was very influential in portraying a heroic and unified British public.[107] Additionally, this heroism and unity, strongly promoted during the war itself by official and officially encouraged propaganda,[108] was turned into a dynamic force by early academics in that it has been argued that it led to a groundswell of support for social reform. Richard Titmuss's work,[109] published in 1950, is generally acknowledged to have first correlated the perception of wartime national unity/active citizenship with social support for the creation of the welfare state, thus, establishing a narrative which largely shaped historical discourse of the wartime experience for years to come. As Jose Harris tells us:

> Politicians and historians writing both during and after the war continually re-affirmed the image of the war as the cradle of the welfare state, as the launching-pad of Keynesianism, and as an epoch of unprecedented social and moral solidarity. Evacuation, rationing, conscription and aerial bombardment were credited with bringing people of all classes together and with opening the eyes of the privileged to the condition of the poor. There was much stress upon the link between the confraternity of the common man and the rise of new methods of social organization.[110]

This analysis of the war, encapsulated in the phrase 'the People's War', was presented in 'near-unanimity' by commentators writing during and shortly after the war,[111] as David Edgerton summarises:

> A.J.P. Taylor ended his *English History* with the assertion that in the war 'the British people came of age. This was a people's war...Imperial greatness was on the way out; the welfare state was on the way in.' In Britain 'which faced defeated between 1940 and 1942', wrote Angus Calder, were the 'seeds of a new democracy'; the rulers had to ensure the cooperation of all society by making 'concessions in the direction of a higher standard of living for the poor, greater social equality and improved welfare services.[112]

Arthur Marwick, another key figure in early histories of the war, argued for a more complex model of the correlation between the war and welfare state than his predecessors, but shared Titmuss's view that the conflict led to profound changes in British society, caused in part by the collective nature of the war effort.[113] Angus Calder's *The People's War*, published the year after Marwick's *Britain in the Century of Total War*, is considered by some to be the first 'revisionist' history in that it not only gave thorough and detailed review, but also offered much more critical analysis, as well as gave greater examination to the causal relationships of wartime phenomena. Calder's work is also notable for

placing social change in the context of the pre-war period.[114] For these reasons, *The People's War* rightly remains a standard text on the war.

Yet, analysis of the motivation of the wartime public for their efforts on the home front and more probing analysis of wartime perceptions were largely lacking in these early works, even Calder's, and continued to be a missing aspects of critical analysis for many years. While acknowledging difficulties faced by civilians, early analysis of home front participation lacked thorough consideration of motive and understandings, and thus contributed to the rendering of conclusions that efforts by the civilian population were largely heroic, and which characterised the social history of the war was in terms of solidarity and increased social concern.[115]

More recent works have also identified that scholarship dating from the 1960s was heavily influenced by what has been characterised as the thesis of 'British decline'. Edgerton, for instance, argues that the perceived decline in national prestige caused early historians of the war to prop up British national self-image through histories of the conflict favourable to Britain.[116] Edgerton points out that the notion of decline was taken advantage of by scientific experts, especially in the post-war era, in their bids for increased funding, which thus offered the basis for historians to draw the conclusion of decline.[117] Mark Roseman similarly asserts that: 'memories and experiences were marshalled and regrouped by the needs and demands of post-war society,' and argues for a need to better understand the: 'dialogue between war and the post-war period'.[118]

The conception of the war as the People's War was also bolstered in the 1970s through the surge in the writing of history from below to rediscover the beliefs and experiences of ordinary people.[119] The People's War narrative also received some reinforcement by the oral history effort of the 1980s which often saw interviews conducted through local councils by relatively untrained staff of individuals by that time far removed from wartime circumstance thus resulting in often uncritical interviews which tendered heroic recollections of wartime experiences.[120]

3.3 *Changing Perceptions of the Home Front*

Historical perceptions of the home front began to be significantly altered as, according to Donnelly: ‘more archival material became available and a generation of historians who were born after the war began to write about the conflict with more critical detachment’.[121] Furthermore, the reshaping of the image of wartime society was, and continues to be, affected by evolving ideological perspectives and methodological approaches to history, including the rise of gender history, the expansion of social history, the impact of postmodernism, and the so-called cultural and linguistic turns. The attack on the social paradigm in the social histories of the 1960s and 1970s combined with textual theory, which was influenced by postmodernism, to, according to John Tosh: ‘assault...referential notions of representation....culture itself was seen as a construction, rather than a reflection of reality.’[122] Led by Raymond Williams, Stuart Hall, and Richard Hoggart, the cultural turn, as it is termed, seeks, as Jeffrey Richards states, to: ‘elucidate the meanings and values implicit and explicit in the art, literature, learning, institutions and everyday behaviour within a given society.’ This has led, according to Richards, to: ‘an explosion of interest in culture and cultural studies’, in recent years. [123]

Developments in both social and cultural history have brought strengths and weaknesses to the methodological approaches taken towards historical enquiry of the war. Each have greatly broadened both the subjects under examination and illuminated meaning in areas of examination, often through more nuanced attention to the questions asked of, and the approaches taken towards, history. Postmodernism has also brought greater awareness to the historical method by encouraging recognition of an awareness of the difference of the past, the limits of knowledge, as well as of the biases of the researcher. These changes led, as Harris states, to: ‘increasing scepticism among historians of both right and left about the supposedly ‘revolutionary’ impact of the war upon British social structure and institutions, and ‘criticism of the ‘consensual’ image of the war.’[124] Angus Calder revisited many of the key themes of the People’s War narrative in his *The Myth of the Blitz* (1991) with the purpose of being less ‘beguiled’ than when he first wrote of the conflict in the 1960s.[125] Harold Smith’s *Britain in the Second World War: A Social History* (1996) gave critical analysis to areas of social change by using newly released primary source material in order to

evaluate claims that the war introduced a new sense of social solidarity and social idealism which led to a consensus surrounding welfare reform.[126] Roseman has also questioned the consensus surrounding welfare reform and instead describes the welfare state as the product of longer processes of social change.[127]

Indeed, numerous works with a variety of conceptual frameworks have given much more critical examination of the home front and have greatly expanded, and in some cases corrected, historical understanding of the conflict. Gender historians such as Summerfield have shown that the fraternity of the People's War was more contested than previously portrayed, with women often enduring criticism and even contempt for taking part in the war effort in ways deemed unfeminine, such as in the Home Guard, Women's Land Army, and in industry.[128] Summerfield has also contested the long-held view that the war was a liberating force in the lives of women. More recently, Wendy Ugolini, along with others, has shown contestation existed between ethnic groups, especially those of origin in the Axis countries of Italy and Germany.[129] Mark Roodhouse gave new dimension to the mental world of British wartime society in his analysis of the ethical dynamics of the home front as related to material life and the rationing of food and other items.[130]

Elements previously left out or submerged within the People's War narrative have also been argued for and to various degrees reinserted, including, for instance, Britain's place as a 'key member' of the wartime 'United Nations' which includes a more proportional understanding of Russian, American, and other nation's military role in the conflict,[131] and the role of Empire in British identity and in the prosecution of the war, thus offering some balance to the notion long cultivated of Britain's solitary position against Nazi Germany.[132]

Still, established narratives have proven extremely resilient.[133] For instance, whilst certainly not universal, the understanding of wartime national solidarity giving rise to the welfare state remains widely received. For example, Peter Howlett, writing for the Central Statistical Office, asserts:

> The impact of the war on social conditions cannot be underestimated: the evacuation of more than four million mothers and children from urban to rural areas over the course of the war brought about important change....evacuation, by revealing town to country, poor to rich, rowdy to

> respectable, gave Britain a new dimension of self-knowledge, and aroused a new sense of social concern.[134]

Sonya Rose's 2004 study similarly argues that the nation: 'witnessed a new "structure of feeling'' ', at the centre of which was: 'concern about social and economic inequality and a renewed focus on "the social question" '.[135] Mark Connelly argues that the sheer numbers of cultural items expressing notions of unity and heroism are indicative of the veracity of the solidarity argument.[136]

In seeking to explain the steadfastness of certain understandings of the wartime populace, Hester Vaizey writes that: 'historians have failed to explore individuals' motives for their greater involvement in civic life,' on account of: 'a general nostalgia for the alleged national unity of wartime Britain'. According to Vaizey, Hinton's analysis of individual wartime lives is unique in that it: 'reveal[s] an unexplored dimension of civic participation.'[137] Additionally, Hinton's work contends that the mythological understandings of the war are, especially in the public realm, far from dismantled, and that cultural products are still in many, but not all, cases being read as near direct windows into the thoughts and feelings of the wartime populace. In a more general sense, Stephen Greenblatt has also taken issue in recent years with the technique of historians to view artistic representations as 'the relfection of society', and encourages those conducting analysis to instead see what he has termed the 'exchanges' or 'negotiation' between the domains of art and society.[138] Summerfield and Corina Peniston-Bird have similarly argued that meanings felt at the time have been reconfigured or lost altogether in a 'selective amnesia' which followed the war.[139] Thus whilst Jose Harris argued in 1992 that: 'there has been some questioning...of the mythological and methodological basis of the accumulation of popular memory by which the picture of popular consensus has been built up', and that: 'historians have become much more sensitive to the fact that many of the "sources" for the wartime consensus were themselves part of the consensus-creating process',[140] the veracity of this view has met some opposition as illustrated in the comments by Hinton, Summerfield, and Peniston Bird above.

3.4 *Reassessment*

Alan Milward and David Edgerton, although not alone, have perhaps been the most forceful amongst historians in arguing the need for reassessment of the conflict's interaction with social change in order to remove the centrality of the welfare state, each arguing that the narrative displaces and obscures other factors of social change.[141] Milward, as Edgerton credits, made a: 'powerful and under-appreciated point when he noted a generation ago that his fellow historians of wartime Britain exaggerated domestic social change and downplayed economic change, especially its international aspects.'[142] Edgerton asserts the studious exclusion of: 'the military and experts and machines', which has severely distorted understanding of the war and social change in Britain.[143] The ingrained identification of the British state with the welfare state during the Second World War, Edgerton argues should be reconsidered in favour of a view of wartime Britain which incorporates to a much greater extent the role of the British state as one 'organised around the successful prosecution of war'[144] and one wherein domestic social change does not overshadow 'crucial international aspects of the war'.[145] As Edgerton argues:

> the welfare state itself remains central to historical understanding....Yet there are good reasons to reject welfarism as the central feature of the history of the state and of Britain more generally in this period. Indeed we need to reassess the whole history and historiography of the period.[146]

The consensus model is also being questioned from other angles. Lizzie Collingham, for instance, argues that full-employment and the necessary regulation of foodstuffs made the critical difference in the poor of the nation getting better nutrition during the conflict, and that what class levelling society experienced was prompted by the exigencies of war[147] not egalitarian movements/measures within society or government.[148]

In recent years, the consensus argument has also been somewhat displaced as a central foci of works concerned with the war as the topics of national identity and citizenship have instead emerged as preiment concerns This displacement may be a product of the rise in public concern to address questions of citizenship and national identity. These topics have been prominent in public debates surrounding, for instance, the Falklands War[149] and Britain's inclusion in the European Union, the anniversaries of significant wartime events and the

commemorations which surround them, Britain's inclusion in the European Union and subsequent debates surrounding this, and increased immigration from both the EU and the Commonwealth since the war. National identity has also been brought to the fore of debate due to the rise of the heritage industry, discussed in Patrick Wright's *On Living in an Old Country*.[150] Indeed, it should not be underestimated the degree to which the astonishing growth of the heritage industry in Britain in the last twenty years has contributed to the popular memory of the Second World War being brought back to the fore.[151] National discussions on citizenship and national identity were moreover affected by ongoing debates over regionalism and the recurring theme of a north/south divide in England. Academic regional studies, earlier initiated by Richard Hoggart, Raymond Williams, and J.G.A. Pocock, have, more recently, been joined by Dave Russell and others.[152] Additionally, calls for devolution by some in Wales and Scotland have also raised questions of national identity to the centre of national debate. Together these events and phenomena caused historians to increasingly in the 1990s and 2000s consider how the war interacted and has continued to interact with notions of national identity and citizenship.[153]

The use of cultural products has been especially visible in the increased focus on national identity in historical works on the conflict. Due to the widely held perception of increasing individualism in British society, and lack of public-mindedness, citizenship has similarly become a central focus of many of the works on the war. Here, the alleged active citizenship of the wartime populace is compared and contrasted with recent society's alleged isolation and selfishness. Cultural products from the era became a supposed window into the discourse of ordinary Britons and have greatly been used in examination of both national identity and citizenship.[154] Indeed cultural products from the era do appear ripe for excavation of notions of citizenship and national identity. Given the exigencies of war, promotion of citizenship and depictions of the nation permeated cultural products at the time.[155] As Hinton states: 'At no other time in British history had the pressures been greater on individuals to shape their lives as dutiful citizens'.[156]

However, the research here of the lived experience suggests that placing citizenship and national identity as the central lens(es) of analysis of the

wartime population can result in misinterpretation and misconstruction of how some people understood and interacted with their experience. Furthermore, cultural products, though undoubtedly useful in historical investigation, do not fully reveal the emotional realities with which historical actors were grappling. Whilst there was certainly a constant flow of traffic into the wartime individual's mind, understanding what the individual received, reshaped, and rejected altogether entails greater complexity than extrapolating the flow of traffic itself. As Hinton states: 'By...collapsing subjectivity into discourse, historians risk neglecting the moment in which culture was confronted by experience; the creative moment in which an individual, struggling to make sense of him- or herself in the world, will bend, select, recombine, amend or transform sources of meaning available in the public culture.'[157]

Thus this thesis seeks to join other works in offering fresh examination of the social consequences of living during the Second World War. It does so by exploring the individual not first and foremost as a citizen, but rather, as a human being with personal understandings and perceptions, who was a member of a family and of communities, and who dealt with a personal life and the fears, anxieties, hopes and joys that went with it. Furthermore, this study argues against the notion that citizenship accounts fully for behaviour or participation on the home front, even that participation seemingly in-line with public representations of good citizenship. When looked at in the reality of a life, home front participation can be seen in some cases to have been motivated by a variety of understandings and intentions other than notions of good citizenship and, thus, examination seeks to explore the broad range of understandings of motive and intent behind one individual's participation on the home front.

This study joins an increasing concern amongst historians' work for and nuanced approach towards discovering how people actually felt and the implications thereof, and which do so by going to the source of those feelings: the individuals who held them. The lack of such lines of questioning in previous scholarship is not indicative that it is not a valid approach or not in search of valid answers, but rather it is symptomatic of the difficulty of accessing and interpreting the subjective experience. As Katherine Knight has stated: 'the most elusive thing to capture is the emotional truth of the past. I can tell you how many ounces of cheese we had per week, how we managed with few eggs

and many potatoes, but how we felt about it all is more difficult to convey.'[158] Max Hastings similarly describes the dilemma: 'Contemporary diaries and letters record what people did or what was done to them, but often tell us little about what they thought; the latter is more interesting, but more elusive....only a small minority have the emotional energy for reflection, because they are absorbed in their immediate physical surroundings, needs and desires.'[159] It has also been suggested that the difficulty in accessing the personal even amongst diarist sources stems from the fact that: 'Few diarists go on long enough to reveal themselves.'[160]

Moreover, even once the subjective experience is apprehended, to utilise it in connection to wider events is largely unchartered territory. As Hinton explains, there is still much work to be done towards 'integrating the study of the subjectivities of ordinary people in to the history of social and cultural change.'[161]

The difficulty of accessing and integrating personal narratives into scholarly analysis is exemplified by the use of arguably one of the richest social resources of the war, the Mass-Observation archives. The diaries and direct responses of wartime Mass Observers have, according to Mark Roodhouse, in the past: 'been too dense to use effectively and [researchers] chose to concentrate on the topic collections and file reports.' Moreover, research constraints, states Roodhouse, force scholars to adopt a strategy of picking the 'lowest, ripest fruit' in the way of topical information and ignore the potential of the diaries towards greater analytical depth and breadth.[162] As Roodhouse's own use of the Mass Observation archive demonstrates however, even for analysis of topical information, historians' appreciation of subjective responses adds considerable dimension to any discussion. The worth of Tony Kushner's use of Mass Observation to access and interpret strains of thought concerning race in twentieth-century Britain in his work *We Europeans? Mass Observation, 'Race' and Identity in the Twentieth Century* is also notable in this regard.[163] However, whilst more critical treatment has increasingly been given to topical analysis of life writing sources, and indeed public interest in diary writing has seen numerous wartime diaries published in recent years, as far as treatment of the wartime populace goes, Hinton's work is exceptional in connecting wartime

diarists' sense of selfhood to the wider socio-cultural environment to which they belonged.[164]

3.5 *The Work of Emotional History*

In spite of the difficulties, the effort of investigating life writing documents and placing the lived experience at the centre of analysis is one worth making and has been well demonstrated by Hinton, as well as works not connected with the Second World War British homefront. This study locates itself in the historiography by asserting that the exploration of selfhood in a specific context allows us get closer to the: 'complexities of human behaviour, the inner-drives and meaning-making' of historical peoples than perhaps any other method, especially those methods which: 'confine motives to the public sphere and at the level of discourse'.[165] In this way, it follows in the path of Hinton's study of Mass Observationists' subjective wartime experiences, but can also be included within a larger methodological framework developed over the last thirty years or so by academics illustrating the worth of the micro-narrative approach to history.

According to Peter Burke, the movement towards micro-forms of history has three determinants. Firstly, argues Burke, 'micro-history was a reaction against a certain style of social history that followed the model of economic history, employing quantitative methods and describing general trends without communicating much sense of the variety or the specificity of local cultures.'[166] Secondly, Burke continues:

> micro-history was a response to the encounter with anthropology' wherein an alternative model was offered: 'that of an extended case-study in which there was space for culture, for freedom from economic or social determinism and for individuals, faces int he crowd. The microscope offered an attractive alternative to the telescope, allowing concrete individuals or local experience to re-enter history.[167]

Finally, Burke explains that 'micro-history was a response to a growing disillusionment with the so-called 'grand narrative' of progress, [in the form of] the rise of modern western civilization....This triumphalist story passed over the achievements and contributions of many other cultures'.[168]

Thus, in the process of pioneering a new technique, micro-history also had to face the same challenge it was seeking to overcome—that of traditional understandings of the use of narrative, which was to offer, as Burke describes

‘portraits’ of various ages. In order to avoid the tendency of narrative to emplot stories as one of progress, or alternatively as one of nostalgia and loss, Tosh states that historians have had to learn ‘new ways of deploying narrative.’ Tosh describes that: ‘social historians, in a reversal of their practice a generation ago, now favour narrative as a means of conveying how the social structures, life cycles, and cultural values that they analyse in abstract terms were experienced by actual people.’ Tosh continues by describing that one way of doing this is rather than construct narratives for society as a whole, some historians have chosen to ‘compose exemplary or illustrative stories, perhaps best termed “micronarratives.” ’[169]

Micro-narratives employ a form of historical writing wherein the historian does not lose touch with the ‘hard surfaces of life’, as Clifford Geertz phrased it, in the process of looking at the connection of the individual and their communities to the bigger picture. In this way, historians using micro-narrative seek focussed examination wherein the ideas of ordinary people are linked to broader cultural developments.

Burke points out that ‘one of the most interesting results’ of the reconsideration given to narrative, and the use of it in the form of micro-narrative in particular, ‘has been the reopening of the debate on historical explanation.’[170] This is because what can seem to have been caused by one thing when looked at in a broad sense, can, upon closer examination, reveal explanations which were previously unapparent. For example, Burke cites that ‘civil wars that, at a national level, look like conflicts of ideology appear more like rivalries of conflicts of interest when viewed at a local level.’[171]

Carlo Ginzburg’s *The Cheese and the Worms* (1980) is perhaps the most well known work employing the micro-narrative, but other works since have also exemplified this technique, including Christopher Dyer’s *A Country Merchant, 1495-1520* (2012), Matthew Lundin’s *Paper Memory* (2012)**,** Laura Ulrich Thatcher’s *A Midwife's Tale* (1991), and John Tosh’s study of Victorian masculinity, *A Man’s Place* (2007).[172] Of what can be gained by this technique Tosh argues in relation to his work that: ‘More is revealed about masculine identity...in the story of Edward Benson’s marriage to a child-bride, or Isaac Holden’s battle with his strong-minded second wife, than in all the homilies

addressed to young men on the threshold of adulthood.'[173] The value of such an approach has also recently been highlighted in Melanie Tebbutt's recent work, *Being Boys* (2012), which draws on an individual's diary and the subjective experience conveyed therein as a teenager of inter-war Britain to explore the times. One reviewer writes: 'In fact, after completing the book this reader felt it would have been nice to consider (if possible) more such diaries. At this point in time however, there are only limited examples in the public domain, and a future funded project may well be needed in order to coax more of these diaries out of private families' possession.'[174]

In line with David Cannadine and Claire Langhamer's assessments of the need to understand how emotions were felt and the work they did,[175] this study also finds agreement with Tosh and Hinton and other proponents of investigating the emotional dimensions of the past through micro-narratives as well as other techniques, by arguing that discovery of emotions is not an end in itself, but that in elucidating people's worlds, light is shed beyond the individual's own personal emotional realm. Indeed, investigation of lived reality is not limited to the individual but allows for considerable reconstruction of social meanings, and offers a glimpse into the social and emotional worlds inhabited by past peoples in ways which allow for recognition of past realities unavailable by examination of cultural products alone. Hinton highlighted this in his discussion of nine wartime diarists, revealing the disparity between lived reality and cultural representations.[176] Peter Atkins has also located misinterpretation via cultural products in the mischaracterization of the the school milk provision in the public campaign surrounding it. 'The provision of school milk,' states Atkins:

> for twenty years after the Second World War the symbol of the nations collective commitment to children's health and welfare, also arose out of a marketing initiative, first by retailers and later by farmers. In the words of John McGovern, MP for Glasgow, Shettleston, the 'MISS [Milk in Schools Scheme] was designed not so much to fatten children as to fatten the farmers![177]

Misinterpretation based on cultural products has also been illustrated in relation to the public representation of wartime holidays and public discussions surrounding it at the time and since. Chris Sladen argues that cultural products portraying the Holidays at Home scheme were neither straightforward manifestations of the intent of official administrators, nor accurate reflections of

public reception of the scheme. Looking beyond cultural representations, Sladen found of the scheme that: 'the government's real concern was not so much to stop everyone from travelling, as to prevent attention being drawn to the fact.' Moreover, Sladen continues: 'People at the time were not necessarily either confused by or indignant at this approach: the need for a myth of this kind was understood.'[178]

The importance of selfhood and the lived experience as a framework for historical examination is reflective of the importance agential identity has increasingly assumed in people's lives throughout the twentieth century. The nature of selfhood is recognised to have been affected by the greater abundance of information available in the public realm and other changes, such as education, transportation, and changing social mores, all of which enhanced peoples' creature self-consciousness. It has also been asserted that people's awareness of themselves was enhanced in the twentieth century as a result of being forced as never before to search for ways to reconceptualise and find meaning in their worlds due to the decline in religious belief. Peter Watson asserts the search to replace God in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries effectively placed individuals as their own gods.[179] This, in combination with the developments in psychology, which called into question man's relation with himself and what one could really know of one's own mind, caused what H. Stuart Hughes referred to as: 'the problem of consciousness', and subsequently became central to 'innovative inquiry and debate' in the twentieth century.[180] In addition, Alex Owen suggests that: 'the related issues of the constitution and experience of modern subjectivity [has] moved to the fore....and it is this engagement with self and self-consciousness that some scholars have deemed the truly central insight of modernity'.[181] How people understood and used their agency to interact in society then must be understood to be of relevance to history. As Levi asserts:

> all social action is seen to be the result of an individual's constant negotiation, manipulation, choices and decisions in the face of a normative reality which, though pervasive, nevertheless offers many possibilities for personal interpretations and freedoms. The question is, therefore, how to define the margins—however narrow they may be—of the freedoms granted an individual by the interstices and contradictions of the normative systems which govern him. In other words, an enquiry

> into the extent and nature of free will within the general structure of human society.[182]

Thus selfhood holds tremendous value to the historian concerned with meaning and how past peoples felt towards themselves, their situations, societal phenomena, and the implications of these feelings. This study seeks to go beyond the work already done on wartime selfhood through the opportunity which the *Diary* of Kenneth Preston offers to explore relatively unstudied aspects of the home front experience—that of a middle-class male civilian in the north of England. Furthermore, the abundance of written material that remains from Preston's life, in addition to his daily *Diary*, allows for greater exploration into the perceptions and understandings of the diarist than previously allowed in works concerned with life writing. Not even Hinton's study could place the diarist in their lived context to the degree which Preston allows. The level of detail afforded by the textual richness from the life of Kenneth Preston, has, to date, only been utilized in research towards the lives of wartime individuals such as politicians, members of the monarchy, and a few other public and popular figures.

Previously only one article has utilized the wartime *Diary* of Kenneth Preston. This article uses Preston's diary writings to make observations on the post-war education system and is not concerned with Preston's subjective wartime experience. Another article, which is concerned with pre-war attitudes of Britons, specifically Keighlians, towards Hitler's Germany, mentions Preston as a matter of happenstance, but does not utilize the *Diary* (as there is no pre-war diary), and instead focuses on attitudes of students as recorded by the school magazine, *The Keighley News*. Both of these articles take a reductive, almost satirical, view of Preston, portraying him as a 'Mr Pooter type', and his thoughts treated as mere middle-class mumblings.[183] This thesis is the first full exploration of this valuable source.

The *Diary* and other writings of Kenneth Preston offer an opportunity to explore the alternatives which existed contemporaneously to the images more often examined of the home front. They do this through the presence given to the literature and periodicals Preston read, such as *John O' London's*, *The Listener*, the local discussions and events he attended, as well as those he attended

farther afield in connection with the work of Toc H, an organisation of which little is known and which has received almost no scholarly examination. One local author credits billiard tables and books as reasons why soldiers' commented positively on their stays in Keighley,[184] yet the numbers recorded by Preston of those staying in the service house set up by Toc H (540 men in the space of three months in 1941) suggests another reason for furloughed soldiers coming to Keighley.[185] Preston also highlights the considerable work of Toc H, which exemplifies the valuable contribution of local groups more generally which were not engaged in war industries.[186] Additionally Preston gives presence to the absence of the role of religion in examination of the home front, which as a result of what appears to be a consequence of present-minded history, the diminished role of religion in British society has influenced the lack of consideration given to its place in historical inquiry. Thus, the religious dimension of the times appears to have largely been taken out of the equation as a source of motivation and morale on the home front.[187] This accords with what Barry Doyle asserts is the more general tendency: 'to undervalue the place of religion in twentieth-century social change.'[188] Indeed, that Preston was not typical is not a problem if for nothing else than he offers an alternative image of a civilian on the home front than those representations prevalent at the time, or which have been covered in scholarly analysis wherein the non-combatant male has received much less attention than other social groups.[189] This limited attention is illustrated in Maggie Andrews's and Janis Lomas's recent monograph, *The Home Front in Britain*, where only one of thirteen chapters concerns the male civilian, and this is looked at only in limited terms of of male representation in wartime British cinema.[190]

This study seeks not only to put a life in the context of a war, but to put the war in the context of a life. It explores how the war interacted with the emotional and mental dimensions of an ordinary person of wartime Britain. Whilst his reactions were personal and subjective, they were also inherently interconnected with the wider situation. Thus, whilst this thesis has distinct aims which are pursued through a particular source, these aims are not limited in relevance within historical enquiry. The re-evaluation of economic and other histories need to be paralleled and interwoven with emotional investigation into the past so as to better portray a complete and coherent picture of wartime society. It will be

shown that selfhood brings together public ideas and phenomena with the lived experience, rendering causal explanations through the circumstances of a life. Where appropriate, the exploration here seeks to explicitly and theoretically join other innovative works in elucidating the era of the Second World War by combining the lived experience with social circumstance and therein revealing important information of a critical area of history, as well as contributing to the development of a historical methodology to be used in further exploration.

CHAPTER 4 Pre-War Preston

4.1 *Introduction to Yorkshire*

As stated in the Introduction, the following chapter offers a background portrait of Kenneth Preston's life up to early 1941, at which time he began the *Diary*. This is in order to provide context for much of the analysis of his wartime diary writing of which the remainder of this study consists.

Kenneth Preston born in 1902, in Blackburn, Lancashire. He was and would remain the only child of Herbert and Alice Preston. At the age of six he moved with his parents to Skipton, Yorkshire owing to the collapse of the model train business his father owned and operated. Not long thereafter the family moved to Keighley where Herbert established a photographic plate business, with Alice working as the receptionist. Herbert had a brother in Keighley working as a domestic servant and it is likely he who encouraged the move.

The Keighley to which Preston moved as a young child had been developed since the early 1800s by a relatively small number of industrialists who, leading a large workforce, built up significant worsted and machine tool industries. Industry in Keighley was facilitated by the town's location near the Aire Gap and the confluence of many transportation networks. While applying their financial resources, innovative talents, and keen business acumen to build up these industries, Keighley's industrialists also sought to shape the local social and political climate in their favour. There was a strong element of resistance to outside interference, including, but not limited to, authority from Whitehall and workers' movements that might gain influence amongst Keighley's workers.

There was a similarly strong local feeling amongst Keighley's workers who were also wary of outside forces, including the large numbers of immigrant and migrant workers that came through the town consequent of the transportation networks passing through Keighley. A strong local identity was shaped around independent mindedness, hard work, and technical ability. After the tumultuous years of Chartism and the Corn Laws of the mid-nineteenth century, industry improved and Keighley's workers and industrialists saw themselves as part of a

coalition to keep Keighley's affairs in the hands of Keighlians and promote their town. Local feeling was also enjoined by the non-conformist religious feeling which was promoted and shared by Keighley's largely Liberal industrialists.

From the late 1800s onwards Keighley developed in many directions. The town's physical and mental landscape were cultivated through the development of an impressively housed Mechanics' Institute, resplendent public parks,[191] museums, a library, and various social organisations. Success in local industry was joined and enhanced by a growing field of engineering and technical education. It was a matter of local pride in 1882 that the town was granted municipal borough status. The town's sense of self-striven effort was reflected in the motto chosen to accompany the town's new status: 'By Worth'. Despite the anti-encroachment feeling in the town, Keighley twice incorporated several nearby towns through large boundary extensions.

When, in the late 1800s, industry started to come under threat from foreign competition and changing markets, initial discontent was allayed because the increased demands placed upon workers were absorbed by the women and children who comprised the majority of the workforce of the most heavily affected industry: worsted wool. It was only once conditions deteriorated to the extent that a greater number of male workers and more importantly the middle-echelons of male workers—the over-seers and skilled workers—were affected that discontent grew into a wide-scale workers' movement. Much of this feeling was initially joined with the Labour church of Keighley wherein a more democratic society was promoted through non-political advocacy of Christian socialism. Many looked to the powerful speaker and leadership abilities of Philip Snowden, a leading member of the Keighley Independent Labour Party. With Snowden's departure from Keighley to become MP for Blackburn in 1906 the labour movement in Keighley began a period of reorgansation wherein Christian socialism declined in momentum whilst political action gained ascendancy.

Continued change in world markets caused a realignment of trade relations throughout Britain generally which saw greater emphasis, especially amongst Conservatives, placed on trade within the Empire. Whilst workers increasingly came to identify and trust in political associations with Labour, other members

of the community saw greater agreement with the social and political values espoused by Conservatives; this was, in large part, a reaction against organized labour. All the while, Liberalism in Keighley continued to lose strength in the twentieth century. The decline of Liberalism was inherently associated with increased wariness of, even antagonism towards, social paternalism and therefore with socially paternalistic forms of social engagement, which consequently produced widespread effects beyond the factory to significantly affect the social life of the community.

Although Preston's arrival in the town in 1908 was during a period of fundamental change, enough of the core elements of community life remained intact, including religious association, to provide a stable and lively environment for the young Preston. Notable, however, was that the community life which the Preston's fostered was not within the large non-conformist community increasingly casting their support in favour of Labour in Keighley, but a much smaller minority of middle-class Anglicans, more often than not Conservative in their political outlook and identification. Nevertheless, the strength and vigour of the small group of Anglican worshippers and the religious association thus offered would provide a welcoming environment and became central to his life. Within a short time of their move to Keighley, the family came to live across the street from the churchyard of All Saints' Church. Together with their Anglican association, the Preston family was strongly devoted to the Conservative party, which was prevalent amongst small-business owning Lancastrians, such as Preston's parents. The family's move to Yorkshire and non-conformist Keighley, did nothing to sway allegiance in regard to politics or religion. For the Preston family, as well as others, as David James argues, membership in the CofE was mutually supportive of Conservatism both politically and ideologically. James also adds that small business owners such as Preston's father, were also to identify more with the Conservatives than Labour.[192] Furthermore, both Cannadine and James identify a prevalence for Anglican orientation among small business owners in Lancashire in particular. Like many others in their position, Herbert and Alice likely resented the identification of their trades with socialism.[193]

Preston's parents joined the growing number of small shopkeepers across Britain who, as Ross McKibbin states: 'were almost certainly unemployed working men or women who opened small shops with negligible capital', during this time.[194] The plate business, or any of Preston's father's business ventures, was never an unqualified success and financial uncertainty was a part of Preston's life for the whole of his youth and young adulthood. The only period in which the elder Preston's business was a moderate success was during the Second World War, which again accords with McKibbin's analysis that: 'For those who stayed in business until 1939 the war years were good and that tended to hold people in the trade.'[195] Prior to this, however, whilst Preston was still a youth, the plate business faltered and was converted to a studio. Preston's widowed maternal grandmother[196] came to live with the family to help run the household whilst Alice took up employment as a domestic servant in the household of Benjamin Septimus Brigg.[197]

B. S. Brigg was one of the wealthiest and most influential industrialists in Keighley at that time; he was also highly revered. Although a prominent Liberal, he was well-known for associating with and even assisting members of other political affiliations and being personally involved in many aspects of the town. Philip Snowden remarked about Brigg that he was:

> a man of very rare capacity and ability. If he had not given to Keighley what was intended for a higher sphere of activity he would…have attained a high position—one of the highest in the councils of the nation- and would have achieved national fame.[198]

According to David James, the regard held by many for Brigg greatly contributed to the maintenance of social harmony in Keighley.[199] The influence Brigg would come to have in Preston's life, both through direct contact consequent of his mother's employment, as well as indirectly through his exemplary treatment of people generally, would leave a lasting impression on Preston and will be discussed shortly.

4.2 *Family Life*

Preston was brought up in a household which experienced financial uncertainty, but was never reduced to the meanest form of poverty. Moreover, as previously

indicated, quite a significant amount of social stability and positive association was provided to the young Preston through the family's association with the Church of England and the associational nature of church life at that time. It was not in name alone that the Preston family was members in the Church; religious belief permeated life beyond Sunday through the activities offered in the age of the associational ideal. Church activities would be the centre of the family's social life. In addition to the social association provided, a deep religious belief developed in the young Preston during this time. In later life he said regular personal prayers and contemplated the physical world alongside the religious. Despite the financial hardships, Preston's home life was also contented. Whilst he mentions his grandmother's fondness for whisky, the family's religious devoutness apparently kept the household free of vice. In later years, Preston would express a loathing of gambling, referring to those who took part in it as 'parasites'.[200] Preston would describe his father in the *Diary* as an inventive man,[201] though it would seem clear he was not the most able of businessmen. His mother was the oldest of fifteen children and was fastidiously tidy and unafraid to make her opinions known, but the sweets she brought home for her son following work betray a gentleness as well. Preston's home life would prove formative in other ways as well. His father likely encouraged reading and participation in theatre, having some feeling for literature himself, and having been involved in theatrical performances as an actor. His father also led the way in active church participation through his own involvement.[202]

Preston was likely influenced by his home life in other ways as well. The family took regular cycle rides into the country where, before Preston had his own bicycle, he rode on a saddle fixed to the cross-bar on his father's bike, beginning his fascination with exploring the countryside from atop a bicycle.[203] These trips first acquainted Preston with a countryside he would come to cherish in his life and to which he would retreat for solace and rejuvenation during the war.

4.3 *Influence of the Brigg Household*

The often generous relationship between employer and employee as existed in Keighley due to industrial paternalism—taken to unique lengths by B.S. Brigg—

would have direct consequences for a young Preston by way of his mother's employment in the Brigg household. Preston was allowed access to much of Burlington House, Brigg's residence, and grounds, adding a dimension to his consciousness that later comments in his *Diary* show were of significant consequence to him.[204] He took note, for instance, of the religious art that lined the walls—a painting of the Madonna above the fireplace in particular. He also would recall in later life staging the toy imperial soldiers given to him by Mrs Brigg in the house's library. A shed on the grounds would also become Preston's retreat to smoke cigarettes as a youth. Despite the Mutual Improvement Society's disapproval of drink and tobacco, Preston did not refrain from either substance entirely; his use was, however, moderate. By the time he was writing in the diary he was in the habit of smoking a pipe in the evening, often it seems as part of his writing experience. He mentioned drink much less frequently, and usually in relation to a celebratory occasion.

More significant further still were the hours that Preston spent in the home's large library where he immersed himself in literature from all ages. Preston would recount of those days that each book would be a great discovery to him. He would also later recall that he had been reared on Shakespeare, but his school work as a youth would attest to a familiarization with a wide variety of writers and poets. Already as just a boy, he showed the ability towards literary criticism which would spawn an abiding interest in literature and shape his eventual career. Of comedy, he approvingly described Phillip Sidney's discrete style, whilst another essay covered nature in poetry as treated by Chaucer, Shakespeare, Herrick, Thomsen, Cowper, Keats, Shelley, Burns, Southey, Hogg, Browning, Tennyson, Wordsworth, Keats, Byron and Coleridge.[205] Like his school work, his diary writing similarly attests to Preston's deep immersion in the literary world.

What the young Preston observed of Brigg himself also left an indelible impression. In his wartime *Diary* he would write of possessing a 'positive horror of patronage',[206] yet the admiration Preston held of Brigg would be so laudable that many years later Preston's son would actually throw out the notes his father made for a speech on Brigg out of sheer disbelief that anyone could have been: 'as virtuous and worthy' as Preston had described of Brigg.[207]

His time at Burlington House also had another consequence—he developed a friendship with a neighbour child by the name of Allan Firth. The two became fast friends, yet, despite the middle-class sensibilities of the Preston household, there was no mistaking the difference from Preston's own family and the decidedly upper middle-class society to which the Firth family belonged. Although not from the Firth's directly, but from other members of the set, the feeling of 'outsider' was, as Preston recalled it, intentionally impressed upon him.[208] So too was a feeling of divide between his and Allan's world imparted upon Preston with the departure of Allan to Keighley Trade and Grammar School, forerunner to Keighley Boys' Grammar School, whilst Preston attended the CofE National School in one of the most economically depressed parts of town.[209]

4.4 *School Life*

Preston was not at home at the National School. Foremost amongst his memories of the time appears to have been the language of the other boys, which he recalled as being 'filthy'—a stark contrast, no doubt, from that which he heard spoken in the households he knew: his own, as well as the Brigg and Firth households, and, of course, that which he found in literature and religious texts. However, by then, Preston was it seems accustomed to his outsider status and despite possessing a slender frame, an obstinate spirit showed through to land him in several school yard fights.[210]

Preston himself received a severe blow when early in his teenage years Allan contracted scarlet fever and died within days. The impact this had on Preston can only be speculated upon. From his comments in the *Diary*, it is certain that he never again had a friend, apart from his wife, with whom he was so companionable. That his friend held a privileged place in his regard is also indicated in that many years later, Preston would name what would be his only child after him. What can perhaps be further surmised of the effect of Allan's death upon Preston was that more than anything it imparted upon him a feeling of being on one's own, furthering an already apparent tendency to individualism, which seems at least in part on account of his outsider status as a Lancashire lad moving to Yorkshire, his Anglican religious beliefs in a non-conformist town,

and his lower middle-class upbringing in a town divided between industrial working-class portions of Keighley and the upper-middle class factory owners. Individualism would also be furthered by an immersion in literature which would greatly develop his critical thinking abilities. In the years after Allan's death, Preston would, as he later described, 'haunt' booksellers, exploring every corner of English literature.[211] He came to have an intimate familiarity with book shops and book stalls in Keighley, as well as nearby Bradford and Leeds, and, in adulthood, those of London.

Yet, it is true also that Preston did find a welcoming and very agreeable environment in the church associational organizations at the time, which, though in decline, remained in being enough for Preston to thrive. He would later write that as a youth church activities were the centre of all his doings. He was involved in Sunday School,[212] as well as church sponsored theatrical performances, the Scouts, rambles, and the Mutual Improvement Society for young men.[213] Perhaps part of the lure of church activities for Preston was that at the heart of the associational ideal was the creation of the individual who found strength and sustenance in themselves and their own personal relationship with God.[214] This was a process accepted by Preston, binding together in him a religious perspective on the world with his own self development.

4.5 *Religion and Religious Belief*

Whilst Preston readily learned scripture and doctrine, he also took to the worldly training of the ecclesiastical institution. As a teenager, the Mutual Improvement Society cultivated in him skills in speech and debate, furthering a capacity for critical thought and expression began by his interest in literature. Green describes the training which speech and debate offered as: 'the defining characteristic of a mutual [society], for though they pursued other activities, and though they encouraged other skills, they valued and taught the arts of reading aloud and speaking up above all'. The mutual improvement society encouraged young men to be quiet, dignified and thoughtful, and through this to resist weaknesses of the mind and the body. Preston was taught that self-edification was nothing to mock or of which to feel ashamed—'respectability', writes Green,

was: ‘subtly reinterpreted…as a divine duty’. Furthermore, reverential behaviour was to be commended—politeness and tact were not the same thing as deference.[215] Whilst the skills and learning acquired in the Mutual Improvement Society furthered his abilities toward critical analysis, they also increased his self and social consciousness. In the learning imparted by the Mutual Improvement Society, self-consciousness was bound with social awareness—the individual was not only to be aware of themselves in public, but to be publicly aware. The integration of Christ’s teachings and a value in improving association with others instilled a genuine awareness of others, as well as the belief that he should care for and attend to the needs of his fellow humankind. Thus Preston came to believe that compassion and aid to those in need were good and necessary things and should be striven for if one was to be a good person themselves.[216] He had no better example of this than B.S. Brigg. As Preston got older, his friend Allan Firth’s father, Henry, would also make a lasting impression of the goodness of altruism and community involvement.

Thus, whilst religion can be seen to have in many cases created dividing lines within communities, for Preston, the example and involvement in his life of Brigg and later Henry Firth (Allan’s father), both non-conformists, impressed upon him from a young age the value of inter-denominational association and of working together as a community. At the same time, however, religious training also had the effect of reinforcing the notion of the individual and of being one’s own person through extolling the notion that all are equal in the eyes of God—it was not class, but the qualities of the individual that really made the man and truly differentiated members of society. This belief in the worth of character aided the creation of a very thoughtful and community-minded attitude, as well as a largely un-deferential and individualistic personality in Preston.

4.6 *His Own Person*

An individualistic attitude towards life would be reflected later in his political allegiances as well. Conservative vaunting of: ‘diversified individuality’, and the value of self-striven efforts and the freedom to do so through limited government appealed to Preston.[217] The guiding principle of Preston’s life would seem to be that notion, spoken of by Conservative Premier Benjamin Disraeli,

that: ‘Man is not the creature of circumstances, circumstances are the creatures of men. We are free agents, and man is more powerful than matter.’[218] A strong element of Preston’s self-conception as a young man was a belief in his own capacity. The course towards enlarging on this capacity would begin with his acceptance into Keighley Trade and Grammar School.

The year following his transition to KTGS, the First World War began and Preston, too young even by the end of the war to be called-up to military service, remained committed to his education whilst taking on a postal delivery route to support the war effort. His father was similarly out of range for conscription, hence, the Preston household was spared some of the worst consequences of the war, unlike the families of more than nine-hundred Keighley men and women who perished in the war.[219] At KTGS, in addition to regular academics, Preston also took part in speech and debate, and was on the writing staff of the school magazine, *The Keighlian*, of which he would come to serve as student editor as a Vth and VIth former.[220] He also regularly took part in school and church theatrical performances and was noted in the town newspaper for his stage abilities, particularly in comedic roles. He played the lead character in a number of productions, including Samuel Pepys in *And So to Bed* and Sir Toby Belch in *Twelfth Night*.[221]

Preston’s education was stalled as a Vth former when he did not pass his scholarship exams and he went to work at a toy-wholesalers where he recalled he was taught, or rather told, that: ‘the ability to drive a nail straight was of far more use than knowledge of English literature or French’,[222] a notion which is illustrative of the value placed on practical skill in Keighley which Preston remained conscious of his entire life. Here, the father of his childhood friend Allan Firth discovered him and supplied the financial means for Preston to return for another year of education.[223] Preston was successful on his second attempt and was awarded a county major scholarship and thanks to his voracious appetite for literature, and an especially keen knowledge of Shakespeare, the Shakespeare ter-centenary prize endowed by the Brigg family scholarship.[224] There was some concern over his Latin, and for a time his university career hung in the balance between attending Oxford or the University of Leeds.[225] His headmaster, T.P. Watson, was instrumental in

clearing up the matter and Preston went on to St John's College, Oxford[226] after a year spent living in an army tent with some grammar school friends and after his mother donated all of her savings. In his last year at Keighley Trade and Grammar, Preston wrote as student editor of the school magazine of the role of grammar schools to prepare boys for the worthwhile duty of service to one's country through the Empire.[227] But in the time between then and leaving Oxford, his ideas of duty and allegiance underwent dramatic alteration.

4.7 *Oxford, 1922-25*

Preston arrived at Oxford in October 1922. He wrote of finding himself: 'alone and without a friend', though he received 'piles of letters' from home before he had even arrived.[228] Some of those were certainly from a young woman he had been introduced to in Keighley and to whom by 1922 he had become engaged, Kathleen Green of Todmorden, who was beginning her education in Yorkshire towards becoming a primary school teacher.[229]

Preston's arrival at Oxford was at a time of significant intellectual change at the university. It was only three years prior that Oxford had begun allowing female students to be admitted to degrees.[230] The intellectual climate was also increasingly charged by the emergence of the 'crisis of civilisation'—a growing belief in the uncertainty of Western civilization and its sustainability.[231] In addition to the intellectual atmosphere of the university, 'Oxbridge was one the main hubs of advanced recreational fashion in the 1920s,' wrote Robert Hodge and Alan Graves.[232] It appears Preston largely disassociated himself from the more extremist elements of campus life at the time, both in his political/intellectual association and in recreation. He knew that much depended on his academic success. And though intrigued by new ideas (he even contemplated becoming a socialist),[233] he may also have found strong ideological difference in the left-wing intellectualism emerging since many who were experimenting with communism were doing so as a substitute or alternative for Christianity.[234] And so too did the Church of England have a strong presence on campus,[235] and Preston's strong religious belief prior to Oxford may have had the effect of making religion a consoling, consistent presence in what was an otherwise exciting but alien environment. As well as

desiring a literary career, it is likely also that he was already thinking of a life with Kathleen and radicalism, politically or intellectually, would have been incongruent with such plans.

During his time at Oxford, his father's business suffered serious financial difficulties. For most of his time at Oxford then, Preston sent home money earned from his position working in the college library to Keighley.[236] Herbert also borrowed money from the Firth family to put his business together again. Preston's years at Oxford, thus, were ones of serious frugality. He worked in the college library during term time and vacations. He later recalled that his diet consisted of mainly bread, cheese, and tea. This did not apparently mean he avoided all excesses and antics typical of university students. He made friends and acquaintances and enjoyed exploring the surrounding countryside. Moreover, he delighted in his studies, though Latin continued to trouble him—what he would call the: 'depressing effect of competition with Public Schools Latin.'[237] In addition to being described by one of his lecturers in English Literature as: 'a thorough and persistent worker [who] can be entirely relied on to do his work honestly, patiently and with a will', he was also described as having: 'a shrewd judgement and a good deal of fine and just feeling for literature'.[238]

Although Preston was not like many at Oxford who came from privilege, he did join the majority in that he was of a generation that came of age after the First World War who felt themselves somewhat separated from the pre-war world. Still, many such as himself came to feel that post-war uncertainties combined with pre-war developments to give the sense that, as Overy states: 'more than the anxieties generated by the Great War and the slump were at work.'[239] Preston's was a generation which had their confidence in the world fundamentally altered at a very formative time in their lives and he and others at Oxford found themselves in one of the ripest intellectual environments in Britain, even Western Europe, in which this was explored and expounded upon.[240] At Oxford, ideas emerging prior to the Great War including the philosophical debate "Oxford Realism"—which questioned perception and ideals—coalesced with the post-war atmosphere to give rise to provocative debate. 'It was', writes

McGrath: ‘impossible for a young man, entering Oxford’s intellectual culture, to avoid being affected by these swirling currents.’[241]

Nor would Preston have made any attempt to avoid these currents altogether. He was a keen follower of the debates that took place on campus and may have himself debated some of these points in a structured setting given the opportunity.[242] Prior to Oxford and whilst there, he also pursued extra-curricular lectures. In 1920, for instance, he attended a lecture by G.K. Chesterton in Silsden, near Keighley.[243] The year Preston arrived on campus, Albert Schweitzer began a series of lectures at Oxford on the decay of western civilization. Arnold Toynbee and Gilbert Murray also lectured on the issues of the day during Preston’s time at Oxford. That he had some contact with these thinkers is likely as the *Diary* includes a number of comments on Schweitzer and Murray especially and their theories.[244]

Such lectures, in addition to the structured debates held at Oxford, deeply questioned the ‘progress’ of civilisation and the appropriateness of many of the decisions taken by nation-states. In 1923, Preston attended a debate wherein it was questioned: ‘That in the opinion of this House the Treaty of Versailles is devoid of the principles of wisdom and justice.’[245] In 1924, the topic at another debate he attended addressed the notion: ‘That civilization has advanced since this Society first met.’[246] Into this atmosphere, came the discovery of striking examples of dead civilizations—Tutankhamen in 1922 and Ur four years later. Of the degree to which this uncertainty over civilisation pervaded society, historian George N. Clark would comment in 1932: ‘It is a fact so familiar that we seldom remember how very strange it is that the commonest phrases we hear used about civilization at the present time all relate to the possibility, or even the prospect, of its being destroyed.’[247] Oxford at this time also published the *Hibbert Journal*, which discussed many of the uncertainties and arguments of the age.[248]

Whilst the most radical strands of thought—communism and atheism—were not indulged in, Preston did clearly re-evaluate many of his views. He gave little indication beyond a curious remark: ‘socialist phase—short lived’ of the extent of the political and social exploration in which he engaged.[249] What appears most likely is that many of his pre-Oxford views were more subtly altered and

amalgamated with the views he came across. In addition to Schweitzer, Toynbee, and Murray, he also, through references in his *Diary*, showed a familiarity with the views and works by such thinkers as Cyril Joad, Leonard and Virginia Woolf, W.H. Auden, Sidney and Beatrice Webb, Bertrand Russell, H.G. Wells, Christopher Isherwood, Aldous and Julian Huxley, Wyndham Lewis, T.S. Eliot, as well as religious thinkers such as William Temple, with whom he agreed, and those with whom he did not, such as Hewlett Johnson (the Red Dean of Canterbury) and Cosmo Lang.[250]

Preston graduated in 1925, and later described the telegram announcing he had earned a second as 'fatal'.[251] The Head of St John's would later inform Preston's former headmaster at KTGS, T.P. Watson, that Preston had narrowly missed a 'first'.[252] He would have liked to have been a professional writer or worked in some form in publishing, as later entries in his *Diary* attest, as do the observations of his closest family members. Coming out of Oxford however, his predicament would be described by his son in the following way: 'as an impoverished lad from a barely known school he had been unable at Oxford to form the friendships or connections which might have led to offers of work in these fields'.[253] When a last minute position at a grammar school in Yeovil became available, he applied, with a supporting testimonial from his former headmaster, and gained the position. And so, from the highly charged environment of Oxford, Preston would go to Yeovil, Somerset to take up his first post-Oxford job.

His description of the telegram notifying him of his degree as: 'fatal', gives a great deal of indication of how Preston looked upon the situation—he would, essentially, be barred from the career in the great publishing houses of London for which he had striven so hard at Oxford. In an about-face from his grammar school days, Preston lost all desire to serve in the civil service at home or abroad, leaving teaching as one of the few career options left to him. However, Preston was not without hope, or anticipation of things to come, at this point. He still longed for reunion and marriage to his fiancé living in Yorkshire, believing their future together was full of possibility. He also believed he would advance in his career by obtaining a more prestigious position, such as headmaster or in low-level administration at a university. Most of all, he still believed he was

capable of writing a work, literary or dramatic, which would catapult his career as a writer.

4.8 *Yeovil, 1925-1927*

For the time being, at Yeovil, Preston would again find himself alone and in a new part of the world. As at Oxford, he found solace in the countryside through walking and cycling. Also as at Oxford, Yeovil was an environment which introduced him to new ideas. Perhaps most significantly, he encountered the society Toc H, a Christian men's voluntary organization formed during the Great War to provide relief to soldiers on the front lines. Those who took part felt the Christian fellowship engendered was worth continuing on after the conflict and established a headquarters in London. Soon thereafter branches took shape throughout the country. In time, it would become an international organisation.[254] Preston found accord with the principles espoused of Christian fellowship and social action, and became an enthusiastic member. He found the association a means to give traction to his convictions of the individual's potential for positive social influence, and the organization became both a source and receptacle of much of his energy.[255]

His time at Oxford and Yeovil cemented religious belief as a part of his life. In Toc H, the religious association of his youth found modern application—egalitarianism and association with other thinking young men who realised the value of community and saw it as a vehicle to affect positive social change. The goodness he saw in Christian kindness offered a strong testimony to him of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In this way, religion became a presence in his life wherein Bernard Spilka et al. write it becomes: 'gratifying to the individual' in that, as Spilka et al. explain: 'it helps resolve conflicts, answers fundamental questions, enhances their sense of control in life, and brings like-minded individuals together....among adults, subjective well-being and religion are positively correlated.'[256] Subsequently the state of what is termed in psychology as 'mature faith' was in entered into, wherein a religious dimension imbues every aspect of life, rather than religion existing as a discrete category within the life of the individual.

Preston's religious belief brought him into contact with writings and thoughts of Church leaders which added to his intellectual investigation of how to be in the world and how to interpret the world around him. Although discerning, and clearly not holding all the ideas of the various Church leaders with equal esteem, [257] or looking upon their works unquestioningly, he did clearly give consideration to contemporary socio-theological writings.[258] Amongst those at the time, Archbishop William Temple was a prominent figure and prolific writer to whom Preston paid particularly close attention.[259] A prominent theme in the pre-war writings of CofE leaders, especially Archbishop Temple, was the primacy of the individual. In *Christianity and the Social Order*, for instance, Temple was unequivocal: 'The state exists for the citizen, not the citizen for the state'.[260]

The primacy of the individual was also reflected in political debates. In the context of the rise of trade-unionism, Conservative politicians made it a prominent feature of the party's ethos, especially so of inter-war Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin who had, according to Cannadine: 'preached' in the 1920s and 30s of the centrality of the individual within society.[261] The importance of the individual was also conceptualised in the role of the individual within their community.

Despite taking well to the Yeovil community, there was trouble at the school. Preston was vague about this, writing little more than that by 1927 he had been encouraged to apply elsewhere due to differences with what appears to have been a senior master.[262] At this same time, the position opened for a senior English master at what was now the renamed Keighley Boys' Grammar School, having gained its own premises apart from the Mechanic's Institute. Preston supported his application for the position with the same testimonial his former headmaster had supplied him with for his application to the Yeovil school and he joined the teaching staff at KBGS in September 1927.[263]

4.9 *Return to Keighley and Marriage, 1927-1930*

Preston's vigour as a student was applied to both his teaching and the expectations he had for his pupils. One pupil later recalled Preston as: 'the most

thorough and conscientious' of all his teachers. The same pupil would go on to state that under Preston's tutelage he: 'read more English poetry and fiction, and scholarly books about both, when I was in the sixth form than I would now read if I were studying English Literature in a university.'[264] Preston's love of the English language gave rise to a very impassioned teaching style, described by an acquaintance as having: 'that quality of inspiration which comes only from one who believes that English is an unrivalled medium of expression.' From this same source, who was the principal of the Technical College in Keighley where Preston would teach adult classes, Preston's methods were described as: 'original and provocative'.[265]

In addition to VIth form English composition and English literature, Preston, at various times in his early career at KBGS, also taught history, art, and scripture, though by the 1940s he taught exclusively English composition, literature and scripture.[266] He was also in charge of the Matriculation and Higher School Certificate work.[267] Outside of the ordinary school curriculum he took control of and reinvigorated the school library, and was editor of the school magazine, *The Keighlian.* He unsurprisingly oversaw school dramatic productions for which he would receive wide acclaim within the community.[268] Preston also led the literary and debating society at the school and gave extra tuition to boys preparing for scholarship examinations. Although he reported feeling exasperated at times, at least one student later reported of his tutor's manner: 'Preston patiently and helpfully read and commented on them [poetry exercises] outside school hours.'[269]

Preston took an active part in the social and religious life of Keighley as well. He was an active participant in the CofE religious community and also showed himself an able actor in many theatrical productions. Toc H had left too much of an indelible impression to be left behind in the move from Yeovil, and upon his return to Keighley, Preston set to work establishing a local branch. He drew on his associations with the Firth and Brigg families from his childhood as well as others from the middle-class community in Keighley to garner donations for Toc H to gain a premise of its own and for the various activities in which the organisation involved itself. That members and supporters were both Anglican and non-conformist in composition spoke directly to Toc H's efforts to bring

together disparate parts of the community since Anglicanism and non-conformity remained in Keighley, as elsewhere, according to McKibbin, at this time: 'almost mutually exclusive social networks, even for those whose class position was identical.'[270] The activities of Toc H were similarly inclusive and were far reaching within the community. Toc H's priorities were to ease burdens in the lives of those in the community, as well as to create an environment for members themselves to enjoy. Meetings were held wherein activities were intended, much as in the Mutual Improvement Society, to enhance the individual and draw members closer together in Christian fellowship.

Preston also worked to save money in order to marry Kathleen, which he felt unable to do until he could provide in a manner he felt appropriately met the demands of respectability. He detailed these efforts in a piece of writing in 1929 arguing on behalf of dress reform subtitled 'A Bachelor Speaks'.[271] In this, he drew attention to many of the unspoken expectations with which he met in his attempt to, as he wrote: 'keep up appearances.' Of a school master, he described: 'there are many calls, both upon the time and sympathies [for] he is popularly supposed to be in receipt of such a princely salary'. That the Second Master at the school 'with a salary more than double' Preston's set the pace for donations to various appeals saw Preston hard pressed to keep up. He also provided financial assistance to his parents during this time to meet their living costs and sought to personally pay off the large loan extended to his father by Henry Firth whilst Preston was at Oxford. Mr Firth dismissed the debt, but Preston insisted it be paid. By 1929 he had put nearly £60 towards the debt, leaving £300 yet to be paid, and by the time he began the *Diary* in 1941 he had paid of the remaining the balance.

The year after he wrote on dress reform, he felt finally able to keep up appearances for two and in July 1930 he and Kathleen Green of Todmorden married after an engagement of seven yeas. The couple honeymooned in Stratford upon Avon. The next year, a son was born, Allan. He remained the couple's only child. A home was purchased in the respectable district of Utley on the north side of town, along Skipton Road, with a view out of the back overlooking the moors. A lot behind the house ideal for a very large vegetable garden became available, but Preston resisted buying it to continue to pay off

his father's loan from Mr Firth. They had no domestic help; Kathleen took on the Yorkshire housewife's tradition of doing all the cooking and cleaning herself.[272] Sometime before the Second World War, Kathleen's mother, born in 1862, would also become a permanent resident of the household. Whether or not the signs of mental decline which would afflict her by the time the *Diary* was started were evident or not at that point is not known. Nor is it known precisely how Preston felt about this, except that he likely felt it a part of his duties as a husband and son-in-law.[273]

For Preston, the 1930s were a time, the first he would have known in his life, of prolonged comfort and stability. After a lifetime of uncertainty and financial hardship, he attained composure, able to comfortably support himself and his family in a job relevant to his keenest interests and a participant in the social affairs of the community in which he felt accord and approval. Within Keighley's relatively small middle-class community, the trope of gentility was highly placed. In the 1930s and 1940s, Nicola Humble has argued that the middle classes: 'became the custodians of aristocratic culture'.[274] Humble goes on to state that: 'the middle-class annexation of aristocratic culture…played a significant part in establishing new codes of middle-class identity in the period. With the aristocracy an increasingly negligible force, the upper sections of the middle class hijacked the notion of gentility'.[275] Miles and Savage also assert that a transformation of the 'idea of the gentleman' emerged in the late nineteenth-century and was renewed in the second half of the twentieth-century, which was: 'cut loose from its aristocratic moorings and to gentility in cultural terms, through a concern to reject the instrumental, the vulgar and the course.' 'It was through these means,' Miles and Savage further explain: 'that the idea of the gentleman held widespread provenance...under the banner of what Marilyn Strathem calls "polite society".'[276] This was understood as the right and proper attitude in which to conduct oneself, and embedded in ordinary life as part of being a self-governing agent who performed one's efforts with a certain amount of composure.

Having been steeped in the values of the Mutual Improvement Society, the notions of self-control and possession appear to have come quite naturally to Preston. In both his personal writing and that which was possibly submitted for

publication, such as the essay on dress reform, it is evident that self-possession, dignity, and humility were to be assumed in all one's efforts. It is clear also that Preston felt community striven efforts were to be for the genuine sake of the community and the cultivation of good, free from pretence. He felt unreserved disgust for those who used their inclusion in such organisations such as Toc H to recommend them in other positions. The reserve, politeness, and restraint implicit in his understandings of public performance also manifested in such ways as to see him refuse to enquire into mother-in-law's income despite her living with them.

His identification with the middle-class echelons of the community would also be cultivated by wider events. The rise of the Left after 1931, when it seemed, writes Cannadine: 'as though the workers had been defeated by the capitalists once again', and a new generation of outspoken politicians insisted that society was: 'a theatre of conflict between economic classes',[277] would further separate Preston from what were perceived as radical or volatile elements of the community which, in the decade, earlier had witnessed the creation of the Keighley Communist Party. He joined with others whose reaction to the rise of socialism and strikes, hunger marches and unrest was greater unification politically and socially with middle-class conservatism.[278]

However, his political identity was not just a reaction against the seeming volatility created by the labour movement, but also genuine agreement with Christian Conservative politics which appealed to many 'ordinary' Christians.[279] Preston was, it would appear, a Baldwinite Conservative. It is likely he would have agreed with the vision evoked by Baldwin of a peaceful Britain represented by the countryside,[280] as well as the very positive attitude expressed towards voluntarism in British society.[281] He read much of the literature published by the party at this time, including the 'Working for Peace' pamphlet of 1935,[282] and was a reader of the *Daily Telegraph.* As the decade progressed, however, his support of the Conservative party would not keep him from balking at Conservative governments' policies of appeasement, though it did not shake his loyalty.

For all of his ideological agreement, Preston's alignment with the Conservative

party bore undoubted relation to the material world as well. This was regard to his accession to the world of homeownership during the 1930s private housing boom, which saw many become homeowners who themselves had not been raised in a home-owning family.[283] His position as a homeowner joined him with others of the middle-class in becoming increasingly concerned over taxation and financial management.[284]

Material life benefited in other ways during the 1930s, for Preston as well as others. He became accustomed to the accessible cost of food and other commodities made possible by trade relations within the Empire that has been asserted to have not just benefited the middle class but a sizeable portion of working class as well. Jon Lawrence, for instance, offers a balanced appraisal of the 1930s, identifying working-class affluence in addition to poverty.[285] In Yorkshire, J.B. Priestley's 1933 *English Journey* makes clear the inexpensive feasts that were readily available.[286]

4.10 *Restlessness*

Despite its material elements, middle-class life was not without its difficulties for Preston. McKibbin has pointed to the variations amongst the life-styles and attitudes of the middle-class.[287] Preston, for his part, underlines the way an individual cannot be easily placed within clearly defined categories or roles. Indeed, Preston reveals a multiplicity of factors which led to contestation and blurring of categorical lines—Lancastrian born, but raised in Yorkshire, he felt ties to both places. He was a person born to severely restricted financial means, but with high academic and professional ambitions. He was a devout Church of England follower in a non-conformist town and more generally in an increasingly irreligious country. While sociable and holding a conviction of the worth of community life, he was content and often preferred to be alone, or at least, to be alone with his thoughts, and he hated feeling coerced. Moreover, his critical attitude to the world had a way of putting him at odds with his peers and even himself at times. He was religious, but questioned, even mistrusted in some instances, churchmen. He felt a moral obligation to be intelligent, and to think seriously upon matters and his pursuits in life, but he had a strong sense of fun also, using the stage as one appropriate space to explore merriment and antics.

He was a Conservative party member, but became, as will be shown in the following chapter, increasingly opposed to imperialism and unrestrained capitalism. In many ways a traditionalist, certainly morally conservative, he often chafed at societal norms, expectations, appearances, and authority. Perhaps, most strikingly, despite being steeped in Victorian rules of self and social conduct, he took a thoroughly modern approach to examination of self and society and desire for self fulfilment. As mentioned earlier, Preston felt the levels of dress he was expected to maintain a burden, as was the culture of charitable giving within his workplace to which he felt bound to conform. Despite a love of the arts, in 1935 he described the repertoire of programmes on the BBC as 'fatuous'.[288] And he felt his creative energies stifled by work which contributed to a loss of contentment with his position at the school.

Even before his former headmaster and supporter T.P. Watson retired, Preston made at least one attempt at a position, probably as a headmaster, elsewhere. After Watson's retirement and the appointment of a new headmaster, a discontent—due to tensions which arose between the two men—emerged that compounded his restlessness over his aspirations to further his career. Unlike the warmth and support offered by former headmaster Watson, Preston felt the new headmaster was more coldly professional and little concerned with the well being of his staff. Whilst tension between the new headmaster and Preston emerged as an increasingly prominent feature of work life, there were other developments in society more generally that caused Preston to reconsider the world around him.

4.11 *Psychology*

Probably in large part due to his interest in keeping abreast of contemporary discussions, debates, and issues, Preston took an interest in the field of psychology which had been gaining greater visibility in Britain during his lifetime, especially during the inter-war period. It was a highly visible subject in the periodicals Preston read regularly. An editor of one publication wrote in the mid-1920s:

> Psychology is everywhere; week by week it is more and more in evidence in almost every walk of life, and in wider and still wider circles it is frequently on the lips of public speakers. Preachers take some phrase

> of psychology as the subject of an attractive sermon. Magazines are full of it—and now we find our evening newspapers devoting leading article to its consideration; the dailies print articles from prominent psychologists; on every hand, in fact, as an esteemed correspondent writes: "Psychology is going with a bang".[289]

Mathew Thomson, who included the above extract in his study, adds: 'In sum, not only were new languages and theories of consciousness being diffused to a truly mass audience, but the interactive nature of courses, manuals, advice columns, and public meetings and services was reinforcing the shift of understanding through everyday practice.'[290]

Through his exploration of events and phenomena in the *Diary*, we see that Preston was increasingly feeling the need for cultivation of a consciousness of the world wherein one could perceive that which was, but was not necessarily seen—the hidden causes and true reality behind that which was physically apparent. He looked in this manner upon all aspects of the world around him in the course of his thinking, from relatively miniscule aspects of life to widespread societal phenomena. Preston's examination and contemplation of the meanings and implication of aspects of life and the world through psychology was furthered also by his interest in reading of inter-war essayists. Caroline Pollentier tells us: 'the vogue of the familiar essay emerged…at the turn of the century, with the development of mass-market periodicals'.[291]

4.12 *The Essayists*

During the inter-war period Preston became a regular reader of literary periodicals such as *The Listener* and *John O'London's*, both of which reflected the growing trend of essay writing. From youth Preston had shown an interest in close examination and so it is little surprise his tastes resonated with the essayists' manner of taking topics under their microscope, and examining the meaning of the small.[292] This was to the effect that, as Caroline Pollentier argues, the essayist began a: 'constant reclamation of everyday life'.[293] Whilst some critics poured scorn on the supposed trifling nature of the essayist's discussion, Pollentier describes: 'The ethical value of this attention to familiar topics was often praised by critics, who associated with it with a "broadness of mind".'[294] At the time, J.B. Priestley described that periodical writing encouraged

him to focus his attention: ‘upon the little passing things he might have disdained were he not writing for the next week’s paper’.[295] Of the essayist genre, one reviewer of Robert Lynd’s *The Money-Box* described the author’s attention to daily life as a: ‘philosophy of tolerance’.[296] In this way, essayist reading encouraged awareness and contemplation of the meanings of aspects of daily life, which was important given Preston’s growing sense of discontentment and search for understanding.

4.13 *Americanisation, the Press, and Commercial Advertisements*

His attention to and belief in the value of attention to the subtlities of life saw him become acutely aware of the growing influence of American culture, commercial advertising, and consumerism during the inter-war period. The relationship of consumerism and the increasingly adept commercial advertising is pointed to in Andrew King’s discussion of the growth of modern marketing since the nineteenth century, wherein King argues against underestimating ‘the complexity of conscious market segmentation’ by advertisers. King points also to the awareness advertising agencies had already at this stage of the many factors utilized to define and target specific social sectors.[297] Matthew Hilton has also drawn attention to the advancing techniques of marketing in his examination of the cultural relationship tobacco manufacturers sought to cultivate with the British consumers from the late-eighteenth century onward.[298]

Many scholars have related the growing presence of commercial marketing to American influence in Britain during the inter-war period. This was reflected, it is commonly asserted, in both the style of marketing and the goods being marketed, which were in line with an American way of life seen to revolve around glamour and the pursuit of pleasure.[299] This was represented in a number of areas of British life. Many have pointed to the embodiment of this in the popular films of inter-war Britain. G.K. Chesterton was an especially strong critic of what he saw as the American influence in the newspapers of inter-war Britain. News, he asserted, was printed on the backs of American-influenced advertisements, and the news itself was reported in an Americanised way—sensational in style and content.[300] This, Chesterton wrote in his own weekly newspaper column, was being: ‘rammed down the throats’ of the public by ‘vulgar and silly’ millionaires.[301] Preston particularly disliked the popularity of

American cinema, calling them ‘nit-wit’ films, fearing that they would alter people’s tastes in the arts and cause many to look to the arts as mere escapes and fantasies.

4.14 *‘War Book Revival’*

Also adding to the need Preston felt to develop a tempered trust in society was the war-book revival of 1928-1931. David Reynolds has recently asserted that immediately after the war, the conception of the futility and awfulness of the war was not emphasized in public discourse. It was instead the coming of the Second World War, according to Reynolds, that made the First World War: ‘appear to be a futile bloodbath’ amongst the general public.[302] However, consciousness of the First World War amongst the literary community had already emerged through the so-called War Book Revival.[303] Preston’s immersion in contemporary literature would have put him directly in the path of the publications of inter-war Britain dealing with the war, and the negative feelings surrounding it. That Preston had an awareness of war poetry is certain, he wove lines from poems, such as Henry Reed’s ‘Naming of Parts’, into his diary writing. However, Robert Graves and Alan Hodge highlight another inter-war work with which Preston likely had some familiarity: Beverley Nichols’ *Cry Havoc!.* According to Graves and Hodge, Nichols’s work: ‘made a popular, non-political attack on war.’ Nichols, write Graves and Hodge: ‘objected to the use of the romantic and heroic word ‘war’ to describe modern warfare’. ‘Nichols went on to attack armament firms as promoters of war’ and ‘also criticized scientists for saying that gas was ineffective’, described Graves and Hodge. ‘Nichols’s book’, the authors tell us: ‘had a wide circulation, and was probably more effective in inculcating pacifism by its heart-to-heart unpolitical appeal than the carefully organized Left movements of the time.’[304] Preston, who does not appear to have been influenced by organized Left movements, was heavily influenced by artistic appeals. Given his interest in literature and the contemporary world, Nichols’s work would certainly have been known to him, as would have been the works of Bradford-born J.B. Priestley, who in his 1933 book, *English Journey*, made a vehemently anti-war statement.[305]

Literature also gave presence to the supposed unchecked expansion of the government during the depression. Graves and Hodge describe how this was

illustrated in works such as *The New Despotism: Bureaucracy Triumphant* (1931) and *Modern Government as a Busybody on Other Men's Matters* (1936).[306] 'No steps were taken to prevent the growth of an all-powerful bureaucracy', write Graves and Hodge, and new powers had been created with no constitutional check on the law-making activities of government departments and local bodies. According to Sir Ernest Benn: 'it had become almost sacrilege to suggest that anything could be outside the scope of Government; and that the view that all private resources, intellectual and material, were government controlled was all too readily accepted.'[307]

As with awareness of the First World War and rise in power of the state, the evocations of rising dictators during the 1920s and 1930s of the duty of the people to the nation-state did not encourage Preston to doubt the need of the primacy of the individual in society. Moreover, inter-war growth of a homogenised mass-consumer society similarly encouraged him to not "lose himself in the crowd".

4.15 *Lead Up to War*

Despite his increasingly questioning stance towards life and the world around him, his outward life bore little indication of it. He remained active in Toc H, church life, and the extra-curricular activities of the school. Moreover, his appreciation for the subject of English Literature seemed only to grow over the years. Yet his writing makes clear that by the end of 1935 he felt increasingly curtailed by the expectations of respectable society. He wrote of feeling keenly 'the duality of people'—as though everyone lived two lives:

> a secret life which is partly so because there are elements in it that we wish away—mean thoughts, hatred, indecency and all sorts of unloveliness—and secret also because we figure in this other life as heroes and heroines. We dream of what we would we were—what we hope we may be….The other life we present to the world….To others we seem very very ordinary—stick-in-the-mud-dull, conventional, boring, altogether undesirable. We are respectable and we do our job competently and no more….Both lives are false'.[308]

Moreover, he felt almost desperate strains towards more creative fulfilment, which mixed also with a desire for accomplishment. He was keenly aware of this desire and on the eve of 1935 he resolved to make the effort to begin

writing the work that would free him from his sense of creative impotence and from a stifling workplace environment.

What came of his 1935 New Year's Eve resolution is not known. Perhaps there were changes at work or with Toc H that redirected his energies from writing or other creative work. Perhaps he tried and felt he missed the mark. Perhaps his energies were swallowed up in world affairs as international events became increasingly more conspicuous. In 1937, 100 Basque children arrived in Keighley for safe keeping during the Spanish Civil War.[309] Soon also, refugees, some of them Jewish, began arriving from Europe.[310] Debates over international affairs became regular occurrences in the comments section of the newspaper, and international topics became the focus of editorials and innumerable speaking events hosted by local organizations in the town, such as the Rotary Club.

As preparations for the Second World War began, Keighley was deemed a reception zone. The town's industrial smoke, long considered a health problem was now thought to offer protection and was requested by the Ministry of Home security to be increased so as to throw a hazy blanket over the town and the country.[311] Locals speculated also that the categorization was due to the town's location within a hollow and the sturdy limestone cellars of many of the homes.[312] In the days before war was declared, child and adult evacuees were sent from Bradford and London, with local charitable groups and churches coming out to meet them, including Preston and his Toc H colleagues who helped to find homes and supplies for the children.[313]

Again Preston would find himself in an environment swirling with ideas. In turning to the diary, he perhaps recognised a need to keep private his views in an atmosphere of heightened uncertainty and charged feelings. Certainly by 1941 he was struggling to negotiate his own thoughts and ideas, many of which, for whatever reason, he sensed he could not reveal to even his closest acquaintances. Nor would the war, as it unfolded, do anything to ameliorate his sense of anxiety over the impact the conflict would have on society, as he saw it, or the tensions which he felt with society. Long cultivated to take an active rather than a passive approach to viewing the world around him, public

reactions to the war and new currents of ideas taking hold in Britain would so stir Preston's perceptions as to turn a mild mannered English teacher into what his contemporaries would have viewed as a radically-minded man.

CHAPTER 5 Positioning Civilian Selfhood to War: How Preston Understood What Was Being Fought for and How to Achieve It

5.1 *Introduction*

This chapter probes the meanings of Kenneth Preston's orientation towards the conflict in its early stages. Examination extends to late 1942 when the nature of Preston's involvement on the home front changed. It seeks to explore the meanings of Preston's orientation by examining the ways in which his understandings of the war informed how he chose to engage with the war effort. Focus will be given to elucidating the context in which he saw his decisions, the justifications he made for his efforts and the wide-range of sources which informed his understandings. Within this, the aims for which Preston believed Britain was fighting and the understanding of citizenship he held at the time are key considerations, as are the scholarly debates surrounding them. Moreover, these concerns—understandings of citizenship and the aims for which Preston believed the population, himself included, was fighting—encompass a number of topics which, whilst of specific relevance to Preston during the conflict, shed light on a number of critical wartime areas. These topics include class, community, Empire, and religion, to name a few. This chapter, as with the chapters to follow, is meant to explore the complex interaction of the conflict with the individual and the individual's sense of selfhood, as well as to further appreciation of the meanings and understandings available to the population during the era of the Second World War.

The British public's engagement with the war effort has been a matter of considerable scholarly attention, not the least because it has been held to have major social repercussions during and in the years following the war, and because it remains an important part of public discourse still today.[314] This study asserts that it is critical to debate to further the historian's consideration of how the home front was understood by the population at the time, rather than how it was portrayed in public representations and how it has been remembered since.

Early histories by Titmuss and others to follow, including notable works by Marwick and Addison, placed national solidarity and the rise in social concern, as central factors in the high level of effort made by the civilian population during the war and eventually led to the election of a Labour government in 1945 and therein public support for greater welfare provisions. This is a narrative which still sees wide support today.[315] Examination has also explored what power wartime organisations held to compel good citizenship, the Home Guard especially has received considerable attention. National solidarity, emphasising a heroic and self-sacrificing public was also a prominent theme of post-war works, notably that of wartime Prime Minister Winston Churchill's six-part history, wherein national myths in particular were drawn upon to explain the conduct of the public, especially as related to the evacuation of Dunkirk, the Blitz, and attitudes of peoples generally during the war which were cast as being long held national traits of endurance and stoicism in the face of overwhelming odds and as defenders of democracy. This was mirrored in many other works, and also popular culture for many years after the war.[316] Also in early histories, women's involvement was explored in terms of the liberating effects of the home front and the possibilities for self-fulfilment the war presented, which was primarily available through performing good citizenship.

More recently, historians' analysis has focused intently on national identity in relation to the effort made on the home front. It is asserted that in as much as the population identified with the messages and exhortations of popular and official representations of the nation, they were compelled by them. Examination in this area, led by David Morgan's and Mary Evans's, *The Battle for Britain: Citizenship and Ideology in the Second World War*, and Lucy Noakes's, *War and the British: Gender and National Identity, 1939-91*, and more recently Sonya Rose's *Which People's War?*, has increasingly seen the use of war and post-war cultural products to interpret what 'the nation' meant to the wartime population and how this directly informed people's views of the war and their part in it.[317] As Noakes states: 'wartime identification with the nation may come to be a central part of the individual's identity.'[318] Similarly, some works consider cultural products concerning a particular region, or city/town, for the compelling power of the local in motivating people and framing their wartime experience.[319] This study takes exception to this approach—that cultural products and other

social representations should be taken as representations of social understanding at the time and serve as the primary means of historical analysis.

Several works are notable in relation to the approach here to look beyond national identity, citizenship, and public exhortations as the primary framework within which efforts were understood. These include works by James Hinton and Penny Summerfield,[320] wherein meanings and understandings during the war are located as being more complex and often more personal than cultural products alone allow.

Asking what meanings Preston found in wartime life and why he found those meanings opens the door to the complexities associated with analysis of society's efforts on the home front. Historical analysis has previously largely reconciled the public and private during the war by correlating, even equating, private identity with social identity, albeit sometimes in more complex and nuanced identities than one's identity as a British citizen, by taking into consideration such factors as class and gender.[321] However, it is held here as critical to give greater weight to the private world and inner-springs of action—considered in light of growing appreciation for modern selfhood—to the relationship of the population with the war effort, and with social issues of the times more generally.

That being stated, examination here does not revolve around refuting the presence of the public in individual orientation towards the war. Examination here focuses on locating the meanings behind one individual's efforts on the home front, in part through exploring how the private and public combined in the perceptions and actions of the individual Kenneth Preston. It is within the complex reality of the lived experience that the refutation of the weight of the public, especially of propaganda and popular media, is made, and not with any specific intent on the part of myself. In so doing, analysis seeks to explore and recover some aspects of the understandings held during the period and the way it was experienced, whilst also giving fresh examination to a range of aspects on the home front parallel to considering the current scholarly debates surrounding those aspects.

Examination begins by looking at Preston as we find him at the outset of the diary—feeling anxious as to the immediate circumstances of the war. From here it be explored how he maintained his efforts through the strain he felt by locating and exploring the meaning he saw in his efforts according to how he perceived the conflict and the aims for which Britain and the Allies were fighting. As his efforts continued along lines of his own choosing, examination will look at how he perceived his efforts as the immediate danger of invasion lessoned and it became evident the war would be a prolonged conflict.

Preston's own understanding of his citizenship will be compared and contrasted with public notions of wartime citizenship according to recent scholarly analysis. This difference will be revealed and explored through looking at the roots of Preston's orientation by examining the considerations which were brought to bear on his understandings of the wartime experience. The chapter concludes with analysis of Preston's feelings towards his place in the war effort just prior to his mandatory involvement in fire-watching and Home Guard.

5.2 *Orientation of Selfhood Towards the War*

At the time Kenneth Preston began writing the diary in January 1941, he was clearly ill at ease with the war situation. In addition to the threat faced by bombing and the possibility of a seaborne invasion, it was also widely believed in Britain that invasion could come through a paratrooper attempt as had happened when Nazi forces invaded Norway, Denmark, France, Belgium, and the Netherlands.[322] This was a belief not officially discouraged either. It was widely circulated in the local press[323] and, supported nationally as well. According to Calder, the government had ignored the threat of airborne invasion during the interwar period and consequently during the early part of the war: 'greatly exaggerated the chance of airborne landings.'[324] On a wireless programme in June 1940, for example: '[Foreign Secretary Anthony] Eden described how the Germans had dropped troops by parachute in Belgium and Holland to prepare the way for invasion.'[325] Hence, as Peter Fleming has observed: 'since there was no telling where the attacks might fall, it had the effect of putting the whole country in the front line, of giving everybody a more or less equal sense of urgency and purpose.'[326] The strength of the threat is

attested to in the fact that the possibility was still being raised by the Prime Minister in addresses to the population in 1943.[327]

The importance of this is not to rewrite understanding of invasion possibilities, but rather to show the degree to which uncertainty pervaded the civilian experience. Certainly the threat was real in Preston's mind. Keighley's inland position offered him little reassurance that he and his family were out of harm's way. Adding to his unease was Keighley's location on the route of the Nazi bombers from the continent to their frequent target of Merseyside and particularly Liverpool. The skies overhead were thus a thoroughfare for both enemy and British air traffic and Preston often heard the planes as they passed over.[328] Enemy bombers were known to jettison extra bombs on their way back from bombing raids, and with bombs haven fallen on both nearby Leeds and Bradford the possibility for deliberate or jettisoned bombs to fall on Keighley was not imaginary.[329] As Preston saw it, the prospect that they in Keighley should escape unscathed was 'too much to hope' in early 1941.[330]

Moreover, the situation was made to feel all the more anxious by the constant speculation being discussed all around him. 'Constant talk in newspapers of invasion possibilities',[331] he wrote in early January. Uncertainty was projected into the future as well. He wrote of: 'Papers talking of Jerries saving up their planes and resources for a great invasion attempt in the spring.'[332] Thus, no solace was found in looking to the near future for reprieve from the conflict.

Solace does appear to have come, to some degree, in taking pen in hand and putting down his thoughts into the written word. His use of the diary as a means of secure selfhood will be discussed in later chapters, but it is noteworthy here that the diary was in part a reaction to his feeling of uncertainty and unease in early 1941. His anxiety at this time can be read both as it was stated outright and also as it presented itself inadvertently in his writing. While explicitly telling of the war's apparent affect in causing restless nights—'head absolutely full of all kinds of incongruous ideas'[333]—at other times it appears more implicitly, as for instance, when he wrote 'army' when he meant 'arm'. There are places also where his usually fluid writing becomes slightly jumbled or repetitive.[334] Unease is seen also in the several occasions he grappled with the hate he anticipated he would feel if the Nazis set ablaze his book collection through the use of

incendiary bombs.[335] Dismayed, Preston drew from Shakespeare when he wrote of feeling that there was little 'to warm the blood' as a civilian in wartime. Yet in the same thought he continued that one had to carry-on nonetheless, *as was one's 'duty.'*[336]

This is important phraseology and marks a turn here towards analysis of the meanings of Preston's orientation towards the war. Preston did not merely imply 'what else has one to do but to carry on', but that he had a *duty* to carry on. This is written as a means to shore up his feelings of dismay, and compel him forward. If Preston found reassurance in resolving to carry on with his efforts, it presupposes the conviction that these were efforts he believed worth carrying on doing, that they were invested with meaning, and, in doing them, he found some sense of purpose to the extent that he felt it a duty to carry on with them. The questions then follow—what were his efforts as he saw them? Why were they invested with meaning?

It has long been established that the war meant for the population more than merely enduring the war, but that it required people to engage with the war effort on a daily basis in various ways. As the previous chapter discussed, as a reserved occupationist the ways in which Preston engaged with the war upon its outbreak were, to a larger extent than for many, his decision. The work of social psychologists bears importantly on the topic of civilian engagement with conflict. Examining civilians and conflict, Zittoun et al. in particular describe a three-stage process by which the individual orients themselves towards conflict which can appropriately be applied here.[337]

The first stage set out by Zittoun et al. includes the immediate physical adaptations which must be made by individuals towards the conflict. In the case of civilians during the Second World War, this included such things as preparing the blackout and bomb shelters. The second stage sees the individual looking to discern meaning within events which includes examining *why* the events are happening. Thirdly, as people develop their understandings, they position themselves toward the conflict.[338] For Preston, we see that his perception of the meaning of the conflict was located in two understandings he held of the war.

Firstly, Preston saw a real threat in Nazi Germany and fascism more widely, and subsequently understood the war in a very immediate sense as a war against fascist, and particularly Nazi, aggression. He indicated that prior to the war he had felt appeasement was a mistake, writing it was to Churchill's credit he did not say 'I told you so' once the Nazi intent of European domination became clear through military action.[339] He seemingly shared with fellow Conservative and wartime Prime Minister Winston Churchill the belief, as A.N.Wilson writes: 'that there was something uniquely horrible, even by the standards of other twentieth-century brigands, about the National Socialists....[even] before the wholesale massacre of the Jews had begun.'[340] Preston wrote for instance of believing: 'there is something inhuman in the Nazi's makeup'[341] and foresaw Nazi domination of Britain as an 'everlasting night'.[342] Comments of the fascist Italian regime and Imperial Japan are fewer, but also clearly express the belief that both were guilty of the same kind of treachery as fascist Germany. In resisting a threat he clearly believed to be rapacious, he saw not only that the prosecution of the war against the Axis powers was just, he also certainly felt a moral duty to dedicate his efforts.[343]

Yet, a second understanding can also be discerned as having animated Preston's wartime efforts. He spoke explicitly of this but his choices of how to engage with the conflict also speak clearly to the view that the war was more than a fight against fascist aggression, but that there were underlying causes to the conflict and that these underlying causes were significant to his conceptualization of the war and the war effort. These underlying causes were succinctly articulated in a contemplation set down in the first year of the diary: 'How must men order their lives so as to live at peace?'[344] Preston felt having been born in the year of the Boer War, then living through the First World War in his youth, and finding himself again in the midst of another major conflict in adulthood, that something was clearly amiss in how people were 'ordering their lives'. The mis-ordering of life led, as he saw it, to more systemic processes which led to the conflict in which Britain was then engaged.

Preston felt that in the period prior to the outbreak of war, for various reasons, large portions of society in Britain and elsewhere began seriously misplacing values, which reflected in the way people lived their lives which had implications

at national and international levels. The misplacement of values as Preston perceived it, concerned the shift of value being placed on the inner world, to value being placed on the outer world. The profusion of material goods and of a new "faith" in scientific development amongst the general populace during the nineteenth- and twentieth-centuries saw focus generally altered from framing life in terms of moral living, to instead frame life in terms of notions of progress as seen in the physical world which translated into greater desire for scientific progress, material goods, and base forms of leisure. Preston felt that people had increasingly allowed for the diminishment of importance on cultivating themselves and their communities, and increasingly gave attention to remaking their lives through material goods, filling their lives with leisure and the pursuits of a more glamorous life. This led in very real ways, as Preston saw it, to greater contestation for the world's resources and to shallowness in peoples' thinking towards their lives and the world around them. This shallowness contributed to callousness towards others, as people were increasingly concerned with material improvement of their own material lives. Furthermore, because of the desire many people had to lead contented, comfortable lives, there was little political will to challenge the dictators up to Britain's declaration of war.[345] It was thus, as Preston saw, a more examined approach to life that would counter selfishness and the pervasive place of the material in peoples' lives and would allow humankind's natural energies, needs, and desires to be understood, sublimated and overcome, allowing greater consideration for fellow beings and inner contentment, and therein a lasting peace amongst the world's populations.[346]

Preston showed that his thoughts in this regard were not singular. In his comments and reflections in the diary, we see that through his attention to contemporary reading, theatre and wireless broadcasts, he not only had an awareness of, but also joined in many of his thoughts with some of the most prolific and influential thinkers in wartime Britain, as well as many ordinary people from around the world who had the chance to voice their thoughts on matters through the wireless or in local, regional, and national newspapers. Themes relating to the ways in which humankind 'ordered' their lives featured regularly for instance in discussions between panellists of the popular BBC programme the 'Brains' Trust'. Preston noted after listening to one segment that

the: ‘general agreement [amongst the panellists] that science might very well turn away the study of things [to] psychology and sociology’.[347] On another episode the same thread was again taken up on the programme, with Preston commenting: ‘[C.E.M.] Joad once more gave it as his opinion that where human knowledge is most deficient is in the knowledge of man. Man’s knowledge of the world has far outstripped his knowledge of himself and therefore he is unable to control the power that knowledge of the immaterial universe has placed in his hands.’[348] Upon listening to the play *Socrates Asks Why*, which used an analogy of questioning what the population was fighting for—purely a military victory or something more—Preston responded: ‘It was comparatively easy to see what was wrong was there any real guarantee that there was a clear vision of what was right.’[349] This is indicative of his perception of the lack of thought he felt the general population gave to understanding the interconnectedness of their actions, the impact of seemingly innocent aspects of life upon international processes, and of the need to engage with ideas and not just the enemy on the battlefield in order to win the war.

It would seem Preston’s search for what moved humankind was in part motivated by recognition of modern psychological developments which identified irrational aspects of the human psyche.[350] Preston was amongst those described by Rieger and Daunton who felt that: ‘contemporary acknowledgements of the non-rational elements of human nature added to the unease many felt about the ‘modern’ world in which lived.’[351] That peoples should engage in war at all, Preston believed was an indication of non-rational elements of human nature.[352] Whilst reading *Testament of Beauty* the idea was lucidly brought to the fore:

> And even there I am now engaged upon the uncomfortable question of why does war, which is so much against all reason make such an appeal to some deep-rooted instinct in men, so that even gentle and innocent children delight to play at it, and poetry delights to celebrate it. Will the combative instinct ever be sublimated and the struggle be turned into a fight against disease and poverty? Will this sort of struggle ever be made so glorious as to rival homicide in man’s allegiance? What could the money now being poured out not have done for the welfare of mankind?[353]

Preston was also amongst those who felt many people wanted simple answers, ignoring deeper causes for events, and which turned too easily to “opiates” such

as the entertainment industry and material goods, which encouraged and facilitated unthinkingness. In relation to such concerns, he read Joad's Guide to *Modern Wickedness,* which discussed many similar themes and even contained a chapter on 'Recipes for Human Improvement'.[354] Preston wrote of being 'very interested' reading another of Joad's publications, *Philosophy for our Times*, concluding at one point: 'Makes it pretty clear how tragic is our age without values and of how necessary it is to rediscover some values.'[355] The themes taken in the abundant writings of Archbishop William Temple during this same period also placed such concerns as central to consideration, and in a more secular context, the works of Aldous Huxley, J.B. Priestley, Albert Schweitzer, C.E.M. Joad, and Gilbert Murray, all of whom Preston read regularly, also spoke to the meanings of society's behaviours in their writing and broadcasts.[356]

These are only a few of the figures driving debate on the home front whom Preston regularly took into consideration. A voracious reader, he intermixed reading works of English literature with non-fictional treatise and essays covering all manner of topics. He made an effort to stay current in regard to these discussions and read widely on matters as they emerged. He did not shy away from that which was seemingly out of line with his own thoughts, for instance, although a man clearly of strong artistic sensibilities, he read of the emergence of science and of science in relation to religion and art.[357] He read works and considered, even appreciated, thoughts quite different from his own beliefs. He wrote of not wishing to live a coward in his conceit. Although fervent in his belief of a Christian God, he appreciated very much the works of well known atheists and agnostics such as Aldous Huxley and Gilbert Murray respectfully. Although Anglican, he also considered the works of Catholic apologist G.K. Chesterton.[358] It was the person who kept their views hidden with whom Preston found most disagreement, illustrated in his remarks towards George Bernard Shaw, who, according to Preston was: 'good at showing how ridiculous other people are [whilst himself remaining] most unwilling to make his own position clear [as] he has not the guts to say so.'[359] Preston also made repeated comments as to the desire he felt for training in philosophy which he felt he lacked. Preston frequently addressed the question of the limits and reliability of human sight. How could he and society learn to see things as they really are? How could humankind discern what lies beneath mere

appearances? Could our own natural vision be supplemented, to allow it to reach further? He felt the capacity to see also would provide a capacity to control the inner-drives and conflict within the individual. Writing at times of his own limited abilities to perceive what was really behind the appearance of things, he began to make a more concerted effort to look for and read works which would orient him within philosophical discourse.

Philosophy, psychology, and concern for the arts came together and, in many ways, were underpinned by Preston's strongly held religious beliefs. He saw psychological developments in light of what gospel of Christianity spoke to on human nature. Religion offered more than a value system to be applied unthinkingly to life. For Preston, his Christian beliefs interacted with modern psychological developments to question the consciousness of human behaviour. Preston felt that the Christian faith offered humankind a means of seeing things properly—as they really are, despite outward appearances. Therein Christianity furthered one's ability to see beyond mere outward appearance. Religious belief also actively encouraged Preston to not deceive himself in regard to his own conduct, and subsequently caused him to question his views, which also acted as a means of navigating his perception of himself as a moral being throughout the war.

Religious belief also motivated him in his participation on the home front. This can be seen in his notating an admonition from the pulpit:

> Law preached on the text "Be ye doers of the work and not hearers only"....A Christian is to be known by what he is. Christianity is judged by the conduct of its adherents. Non-churchgoers claim, and often with justice, that they are as good or better than those who go. As the Archbishop of Canterbury said when he was Archbishop of York, "If we are the right kind of men, we shall do the right kind of things."

Preston also considered religion in relation to the wartime situation in that he felt religion was important to society because it kept men's 'emotions soft and makes them gentle',[360] which was important in regard to his perception of the callousness he felt was rampant in society.

At a time when human kind was, according to Peter Watson, using the arts and sciences to replace God, Preston saw the arts and religion not in conflict, but as

informing on one another. He also saw the arts, as well as recognition and treatment of the human soul, as providing the means by which society could correct itself. The arts were not for mindless entertainment or status symbols, nor religion an oppressive force in peoples' lives; instead Preston held the arts and Christian kindliness to be supreme sources of human goodness.

As with Christianity, the arts similarly offered a means to greater awareness, of self and of the world. Art, as Preston held, was the best transmitter of ideas, truth, and beauty. Preston's views on art are reflected in Alasdair MacIntyre's perception of the power of the arts: 'it is in the arts that may potentially provide, or at least indicate, the means to extend our searches, and open our hearts—as well as minds—in such a way as to enable us to transcend the confines of our present situations, and enable personal and political improvement'.[361] The polemic element of his view of the arts did not diminish his appreciation, but the creative ways artists represented the human condition added all the more to the wonder and reverence he found in artistic expression. A view at odds with some modernists, the artists Preston most revered can be seen to promote self-examination, Shakespeare perhaps foremost in this Preston's regard incorporated ways to point out truths about human nature for the more observing members of the audience. Because of the need he saw for the arts to elucidate truth, Preston abhorred modern mass culture, associating pleasures such as motoring and the cinema with unthinking consumption and stupidity.

Moreover, he especially felt the need for the arts because of the self-examination they encouraged in light of the effect he perceived science was having upon society. Developments made in the way of science Preston felt gave society what he perceived to be a false sense of confidence and belief in its own progress. This confidence he felt consequently saw less questioning by society at a time when questioning was exactly what he felt was needed.

It was through greater attention to aspects of everyday life, and appreciation for the truth which art and religion revealed that Preston felt the conditions for conflict to develop would be eradicated, not in military strength or diplomatic manoeuvrings. He believed as his contemporary Virginia Woolf asserted, that if the tyrannies and servilities in the public sphere were to be eradicated, they had to be treated in the private sphere as well, in the daily conduct of individuals and

interactions of fellow beings. The perception of the war in this way gave intelligibility to the situation before him. And it was this understanding that guided his efforts and suffused them with meaning, bringing him to feel of the importance of his efforts, even to see them as a duty.

Thus key to Preston's perception of the war then was that Britain was not fighting purely for a military victory, but equally, if not more, importantly were the efforts given to improving people's orientation to life which would persist long after the peace was won. Representative of this perspective is the saliency Preston found in the remarks in early 1942 of Sir Stafford Cripps. He wrote of Cripps's comments in the following way:

> He explained the present situation in India but linked it to the much larger question to which it belongs. He pointed out how hopeless it would be to fight Hitlerism and persist in preserving those things for which Hitler stands. He made a strong appeal for a substitution of humanity for concern for the accumulation of material things. The lessons of war has taught us of equality, of kindliness, of concern for one another's well-being, of sharing and all the rest, must not this time be forgotten as soon as the war is over.[1362]

This and many similar thoughts conveyed in the diary are emblematic of how Preston saw that theoretical considerations towards the ordering of one's life as taking practical shape, and as affecting deeper processes which had ultimately led the world to war, again. Consequently, as the above statement indicates, Preston felt the aims for which Britain was fighting were necessarily tied to these deeper processes.

As pointed to above, the Empire had an important, if contested, presence in Britain's war aims. Prime Minister Churchill's speech to Parliament following the fall of France testified to the central place of the Empire and more importantly its survival in conceptualizing that for which Britain was fighting.[363] Preston was personally conflicted over how to understand the place of the Empire in relation to Britain. Initially his comments reflect a concern not over imperialism itself, but that the British were 'no longer a people fit for empire',[364] indicating that whilst imperialism was not inherently bad, Britain had lost its claim to cultural supremacy so as to be worthy of administering that which was good to Empire nations.[365] As he continued to contemplate both the British Empire and imperialism generally and engage in related discourse however, he increasingly

came to see the Empire as Raymond Williams describes, as an: ‘intricate process of economic interaction, supported by wars between the trading nations for control of the areas of supply’.[366] It was, moreover, not only oppressive to the people within the colonial system, but he also felt it had wrought undesirable change to the nature of British society. This was the creation, as he saw it, of a population increasingly desirous for cheap and abundant material goods, and an arrogance that blinded people to the need to treat people with dignity and see the interconnected of their actions.

Seemingly adding to this realization was Preston’s own implication of guilt. There had been voices opposed to imperialism between the wars, recently highlighted by Susan Pederson,[367] but Preston had rejected those characterizations. He had enjoyed material advancement in the inter-war period. Many of the securities Preston had known during that time were a product of the imperial system, and much of his inter-war consumption had been of things he had known for the first time in his life, primarily abundant and affordable food and housing. In a world at war again, he came to reject finding security in material ends and to believe that pursuit of material ends had in fact made society less secure.

Preston saw a real need in similarly encouraging others to look for other ways to feel secure. Self-awareness and finding satisfaction in non-material ends he felt would imbue a sense of security, and lead also to a physical manifestation of security also.[368] His attention to finding satisfaction in non material ends was enhanced as the war went on. Rationing and the blackout forced him, along with most of the population, to take simpler pleasures. For his part, he came to find greater appreciation in the quieter joys of life, such as the renewal of Earth in springtime. His feelings soared at one point at discovering the first budding flower of spring in his front garden. He became increasingly grateful for heat, light, and a variety of foodstuffs. The desire for a higher standard in living amongst many he located in a misalignment of values, which he thought was largely, but not wholly, consequent of lack of attention and appreciation for development of the inner self.[369]This combined with Preston’s growing perception of the toxicity of consumption upon international relations, to offer a greater sense throughout the war of the considerable pleasure which could be

found in simpler living. He saw in his wartime efforts a chance to promote then the survival of a moral and more thoughtful people.

Although Prime Minister Churchill, in his speech to Parliament following the fall of France, placed Christianity as a central tenet of the British war effort: 'The Battle of France is over, the Battle of Britain is about to begin. Upon this battle depends the survival of Christian civilisation',[370] Preston did not see that the majority of society recognised the need to pursue a more moral and thoughtful way of life. Whilst Preston never gave any indication he saw the conflict as one with religion directly at its heart, he did see the diminishment of religious belief and practice as strongly relevant to the causes of war more generally, and also saw a moral element to combating fascism because of the ways in which fascism ran contrary to moral goods as Preston saw them. He felt a need to work towards a peace where Christianity was permitted, and wherein God's creations would be respected as unique and irreplaceable individuals.

5.3 *Preston's Wartime Efforts*

Preston's perceptions of the root causes of the war, what the war was being fought for, and how to achieve it, are evident in the specific areas and ways Preston interacted with the war effort. Within his efforts there was a clear priority to promote and provide for treating the inner self through the arts and through consideration of the Christian ethic of self-care. Moreover, these aims were promoted in terms of being part of daily life, to be incorporated into one's outlook and conduct with one's fellow beings, not as grand reforming schemes. It was towards the cultivation of ordinary human beings his efforts focused during the war. This is seen in his efforts at the grammar school where he worked as senior English master, and through the charitable organisation Toc H, which will be discussed in turn below.

5.4 *Keighley Boys' Grammar School*

Preston largely carried on with his work at the school as he had before the war, however, in addition to regular school work, schools were required to make considerable adjustments due to the war which added considerably to the daily work load of school masters across the nation. Preston wrote of this in the

following way at one point: ‘schools, of course, are now-a-days becoming anything but educational institutions. They are money raising centres, A.T.C. centres, feeding establishments, clothes rationing organisation, recruiting stations, in short anything but schools.’[371] Thus in addition to preparing for lessons, teaching and grading, Preston also necessarily became involved in a number of other aspects of the wartime school. Consequently, he spent longer hours at work on weekdays, and Saturdays usually entailed some amount of work at the school on account of the above extra-curricular activities which was in addition to the correcting he did for a good part of the day since school hours became occupied with extra tasks. He was also, by all accounts, a fastidious corrector, and he refused to forego his corrections on account of the war.

Furthermore, the work he did to offer a humanstic education to the boys became imbued with heightened significance in light of the war. That he chose to carry on in this position rather than join the fighting services is significant as to the importance he saw in the job in relation to the war effort. He felt strongly that the youth would need to continue to be educated throughout the war, and that young minds should not be filled entirely with the war or their learning diverted towards the war effort as workers on the home front or as part of the fighting services abroad.

His efforts to promote the arts through his teaching at the school were also motivated by the positive personal enjoyment and great understanding he felt that appreciation for arts could provide. In his teaching, he sought to make the ideas expressed in art vivid and real, writing on one occasion: ‘I could not help thinking how much more poetry might often mean to us if only we took the trouble really to acquaint ourselves with what it is talking about.’[372] Through critical analysis of English literature, as editor of the school magazine *The Keighlian*, and through the Literary and Debating Society he sought to train the boys in the art of thinking, rather than merely acquainting them with information. He noted with approval the remarks of the Headmaster of Bradford Grammar School (where his own son was a pupil), writing of the Head’s comments: ‘He talked about the need for developing imagination in boys and pointed out that in some boys it could be developed through their finger tips, in other cases

through the body. It was a school master's job to find it and bring it out. They were a sort of Observer Corps.'[373]

Preston believed the goodness which the arts offered could perhaps be best realised beyond didactic methods through participation in theatre. He gave considerable time and energy to the school's dramatic productions, overseeing *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in 1941 and *Twelfth Night* in 1945. More productions may have occurred during this time but for shortages of materials owing to the war and the drastically increased duties otherwise placed on teachers during the conflict. He saw real value in theatre participation for the boys for the range of exploration it offered themselves, as well as the confidence it offered them. He felt encouragement at seeing the students take to their parts, and at having some amusement in a grim time.[374] Though he professed at one point in the production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* that the elves and fairies were going to be the death of him,[375] he also wrote of the gladness he felt in the rapport of the little band of student-actors in each production.[376] The boys apparently felt affinity enough with him to jest in the school newspaper at his expense, writing in one skit that Shakespeare himself 'who attended the school from 1574 to 1581...certainly owes much of his greatness to Mr Preston then (need we say?) in his prime.'[377]

Preston's own love of theatre certainly served as an impetus to pass on a love of the stage and theatre.[378] He wrote after the *A Midsummer Nights Dream* production: 'Amid all the terrifically hard work to-day I felt again the old fascination of the stage—the lights, the paint, the music, the strange back-stage appearance of things, where things are such as they are, and "not as they appear to be", and he hoped those taking part would all "remember with pleasure" having done so.'[379]

The boys' engagement in dramatic performances and with literature Preston hoped would serve as a foil or as counterbalance to the unimaginativeness cultivated, as he saw it, by the rising presence of other entertainments at the time such as films, comics, and war games. Films, Preston believed, were misleading and dulled the mind. He regretted seeing an increase in the boys' attendance during the war catered to by the seven cinemas in Keighley which had been constructed in the 1930s.[380] Such shallow pleasures as Preston saw

them, led him to feel that modern youth was becoming 'unattached'.[381] He reported being 'very struck' after returning from a Whit Monday holiday to hear that many of the boys had done little more than go to the cinema and that: 'some of them, indeed many, had been twice on one day.' He continued: 'It is surely a sad comment on the ability of the younger generation to help themselves in the way of amusement.'[382]

Preston also felt the need to attract the boys to the arts in light of the growing popularity of the sciences. The inter-war years had already seen the growing popularity of 'pseudo-scientific' fiction amongst boys.[383] That the war took such conceptions from paper and put them in the real world he felt was only increasing the allure of such things for the boys. He saw society more generally as increasingly venerating the work of scientists, and he felt uneasy at the prospect of the boys' education being cultivated towards being future 'tank designers and tommy-gun inventors' whilst still 'in this tadpole stage.'[384]

The degree of concern Preston's efforts reflect for the youth and his sense of responsibility towards them perhaps was the result of the role of adult leaders in his formative years. The pre-war and interwar years saw the formation of organisations (the Scout Association [of which Preston was a member], the Youth Brigade, and the Duke of York boys' camp) tailored to the cultivation of the youth.[385] Additionally, as a student Preston had found his own learning and abilities particularly cultivated through the extra efforts of one of his tutors at KBGS and it was his headmaster's personal testimony of Preston's abilities that made the critical difference at one point in Preston attending Oxford.[386] At Oxford too Harrison writes of the 'intimate world in colleges', where the ratio of students to instructors was comparatively smaller than other universities.[387] Therefore, in addition to his belief in the promotion of the arts, he may also have been accustomed with the notion of the positive role an educator/adult leader could play in the lives of their students.

Ken Jones's discussion of education in England provides additional insight into the larger body of thought in which Preston's beliefs towards the purpose of teaching can be placed. For Preston's approach to teaching appears to be very much within a view of education which Jones states Emile Durkheim identified in his 1925 writings on 'moral education'. The elements of this ethos, writes

Jones are: ‘remarkable in their theoretical and normative insistence that micro-processes connect to macro-purposes, and that school should try to shape the intimate subjectivities of their students, by rendering the meanings and values of society “alive and powerful”.’[388] Therefore Preston’s views may not have been out of line with the general thinking over the role of school masters at this time. Indeed, MacDonald, drawing from the work of Kent, adds that in the inter-war period: ‘The male teacher became a figure of admiration: “stories directed at working-class youth, especially, often taking pace in a school setting, played up the role of teachers and parents in educating and training boys in the right way to comport themselves.” ’[389] Preston may also have seen his efforts partially in light of what McKibbin describes as ‘the developing psychological notion of “adolescence” as a difficult transitional phase between childhood and adulthood when children needed special guidance and discipline’, which McKibbin locates as influencing the provisions of the 1918 Education Act.[390]

Whilst not without consequence, it can be said that whatever his reasoning, there is no doubt that Preston did want to influence the youth. This was very much evidenced by his arrangement of a field trip for the boys of the school to visit a meeting of Toc H in 1933.[391] Furthermore one student later wrote that Preston: ‘clearly had a belief that “Literature” could somehow “save” you.’ That same student continued: ‘In my sixth-form Report book, on one occasion his comment was “he must learn to love literature”.’[392] Preston’s intended impact on the youth is also exemplified in his willingness to teach the religion class to the upper-forms, and the regard he felt for religious education generally. He found strong accord with the resolution moved at a meeting of the Conservative Central Council in 1941 urging the Government to ‘include in every school after the war such religious training as would be acceptable to all denominations.’[393] His conviction in learning can be read in his willingness to give additional time after school hours. One former sixth former attested to his assistance, in ‘patiently and helpfully’ reading and commenting on the student’s attempts at poetry.[394] Moreover, he gave a considerable amount of time towards scholarship tutoring as well.

Preston’s efforts then would seem to have been at least partially conceptualised as a result of his own background, however, it is clear that he felt the need to offer the boys the powers of insight the arts offered because of the pernicious

threat he saw in the popular messages directed at the youth during the war. Preston disagreed strongly with the militarization of youth through pre-training units.[395] He had often witnessed small groups of boys playing at war in the alley behind his home. Whilst he may not have agreed that this was manifest of what Thomas Arnold called 'the bond of evil' of the small boy groups, he did see it as sad to see small boys squaring their soldiers and marching 'two-by-two' on the playing grounds of the school.[396] Sadder and more frustrating still was to see the older boys in his own forms seem to give up on their education as a result of the belief that they would be called up to the services soon.

Preston was especially moved in his efforts by a belief he came to feel more strongly during the war that, as he wrote: 'our warring natures are pacified by art'.[397] He wrote this in reference to both the 'warring natures' within the individual, and in regard to individuals warring one with another. Others too at the time told of a belief in the arts as a medium to foster peaceful societies. The artist John Piper, for instance, spoke of his belief: 'that the world could have been saved perhaps still can be through the spirit of man, especially through art—its noblest and most important manifestation.'[398] Preston felt the arts could sublimate inner contentions, and subsequently the struggle within and between individuals would cease. Finding inner peace has been held as an important concept in relation to societal conflict, in that inner contention is held to lead to the individual to promulgate conflict in society. This was pointed to at the time by George Orwell, who, in writing a review of Mein Kampf, contended that the German people wanted peace and prosperity, but only after they had attained it through struggle.[399] More recently, this was discussed by Slovenian philosopher, Slavoj Žižek. Žižek, who states: 'The problem is that we don't know what we really want. What makes us happy is not to get what we want. But to dream about it....So I think that the only life of deep satisfaction is a life of eternal struggle, especially struggle with oneself.'[400]

Preston's concern with the arts was not only as it related to momentary happiness and delight, but also as it related to the development of inner-peace and contentment, achievement of which he felt would then ease or even eliminate external struggles. The concern he felt for treating both the external and inner conditions of human kind was similarly fundamental to his participation in Toc H during the war.

5.5 *Toc H*

Like at the school, Preston's efforts in Toc H also became strongly attuned to the war both through the activities he participated in and the meaning directing those efforts. As with other volunteer organizations, engagement with the home front began early, in 1938, when Preston and other Toc H members were amongst those who worked to settle and gather supplies for newly arrived evacuees and refugees in Keighley.[401] The effort to assist evaquees continued through 1941 and was resumed later in the war when civilians were again evacuated, primarily from London, consequent of the V1 and V2 rocket attacks.

Another key area of Toc H's wartime activities was in the establishment of a Citizens' Advice Bureau which was established just prior to the war in order to provide townspeople with war-related information and advice. Much of the resources were privately donated by members and it was members, including Preston, who took turn manning the desk, in addition to paying a man who was apparently in need of work.

The organisation also sought to continue to do good works within the community generally, and often directed its efforts to those believed to be underserved, primarily the elderly. Preston was concerned during the war over the treatment he heard some elderly people describe to him of the difficulties they faced during war. Some struggled to find shops willing to sell food to them since they bought in smaller portions, and many he noticed were especially hard hit by tax rises.[402] Preston and other Toc H members also began the manufacture and collection of toys for children at Christmas time as manufacturing had become dedicated to war production, making new toys scarce, and very expensive. The toys built by Toc H members, or collected and refinished, were sold at reasonable prices and proceeds went to supporting the organisation's other efforts.

Perhaps the largest portion of Preston's involvement in Toc H during the war went to the service member club Talbot House (named after the original Toc H service club established on the Western Front in 1915), which the organisation set up in 1940 and maintained during the conflict for the soldiers stationed near the town (many were engaged in tank training on the moors). It was modelled

after the original service club set up for soldiers on the Western Front in World War I. The function of Talbot House was to provide service members on leave a place to go to rest and refresh themselves. Members also helped servicemen in other ways, such as finding places for visiting spouses to stay in the town. However, important in regard to the mission of Toc H was the members' hope for the house to serve as an alternative from the pub or idle time killing, and, moreover, to offer not only a physical retreat, but equally, if not more importantly, a place to revive the inner self. Each of the Talbot House's established throughout the world had within them not only beds and kitchens, but also a library, an inter-faith chapel, and programmes and discussions which were arranged by local Toc H members in order to allow and encourage men to engage in thoughts apart from their military training.

To Preston it was a much needed effort to keep men's hearts gentle and soft, and their intellect active in and amongst the brutality of war and what he felt must be the soul-wearing monotony of military training. Preston does not give a tremendous amount of insight into the talks and discussion programmes arranged, but, in the main, it would appear these were light-hearted, sometimes downright comical, with fewer talks and discussions tending towards very serious subject matter. Preston at times wondered if programmes should not be improved to include more serious talking points.

In the end, it would appear the draw of the house for the servicemen who came to it was as a place to get away from post for a time, they often combined a visit to Talbot House with trips to the pubs and other venues. Thus it served to offer variety to the places visited, rather than being an alternative entirely to pubs and dance halls. For Preston, it was in the more informal one-on-one discussions he had with the men that significant connections were made and deeper-held views explored. He also appreciated that he came to better see matters from the soldiers' position, and he came to sympathise more for what they were called upon to do. He wrote at one point: 'It is sometimes a grim business listening to news in the company of a crowd of soldiers. It is all very well for MPs to cheer the PM when he announces that Singapore will be defended to the last man. They are not the last man concerned. Some of these men may be.'[403] And it was in small ways he saw the House's victories, as when a Jewish soldier asked if he too could use the chapel and was welcomed to do so and in

the process showed and discussed with Preston a book of prayer he carried with him.

Preston also played a key role in maintaining the basic functioning of the Toc H organisation in Keighley and participated in various administrative roles throughout the war. He also worked to maintain association between members themselves as he felt that inclusion in the organisation was good for the men involved, as he had experienced when as a stranger to Yeovil Toc H had provided him community and an interest, in addition to the good the organisation did within the town. With many of its members called to the services, Preston felt a personal responsibility to do his part to 'preserve the fellowship of Toc H'.[404] Thus he worked to reconcile conflicts which arose between various local branches and to promote programmes for the members which were apart from programmes designed for soldiers at Talbot House.

5.6 *Justification of Efforts*

Although Preston felt strongly of the need for treatment to what he saw as the underlying causes of the war, he did contemplate the appropriateness of his efforts. Upon completion of a production of *A Midsummer Night Dream* at the school, he debated with himself the merit of the effort in the context of war, writing:

> So the great job is over at last and I am dead tired! It is queer to find oneself suddenly, forcibly detaching one's mind from that which looms so large and realizing that it means just nothing at all against the background of great events. I have ventured to feel sometimes that I have carried my job out well and yet it means nothing to the war effort (or does it—some hundreds of people were made to laugh—and perhaps in these days that's worth while) and the gifts, such as they are, would not be considered such as merited exemption from any sort of service. The audience really did appear to enjoy itself, and were genuinely amused.[405]

This was a point he did not take lightly; he reflected further upon it the following day, seemingly confirming to himself that it was a worthwhile effort:

> One great thing I am glad of about school show is that some hundreds of people have been made to see that Shakespeare actually is entertaining. I think I am almost more anxious to prove that than anything else. I suppose I am a sort of Shakespeareevangelist. If only I can make people

> have a new respect for him I shall feel that all my efforts have been well made.[406]

His increasing attention to philosophy also pushed him to question his efforts. One entry followed a philosophy talk on the wireless, wherein the implications of conventions were discussed both in the programme and at length by Preston in his entry.[407] Another instance saw him haven listened to a philosophy discussion on 'the subject of whether moral judgements are matters of opinion.'[408] In his discussion of the application of this, we see that his convictions of the goodness of Christianity and the arts, especially works of English literature and drama, were not the results of an unthinking preference of rigid ideology, but rested in fluid and ongoing contemplation. It is also notable that in seeking to enrich his community through dramatic productions and Toc H activities, he was working in a similar way as the government organised programme Entertainments National Services Association in his realization of the worth of culture and merriment during war.[409]

In caring for soldiers on leave and trying to nourish in the soldier a sense of himself as something more than a trained fighter and in treating the soldiers' inner self with dignity, Preston felt he and others working in the same way were working towards preserving soldiers' emotional health and sense of humanity. It was also his hope that the soldiers, having experienced kindliness, would be more inclined to display kindliness to others.[410] Preston also believed that Talbot House was a very important service to soldiers in an immediate sense in providing meals, lodging, and entertainments. Others who worked at service centres similarly felt they were providing important assistance.[411] Preston's belief in the worthwhile work of Toc H is very much in evidence when upon learning that a Toc H member who had been drafted into the services was put to work driving a lorry, Preston commented at the 'daftness of taking a man from Toc H to drive a lorry.'[412] His belief in the effort is clear also in his gladness at hearing of positive reports from the local welfare officer.[413]

Whilst at times he felt discouragement over whether soldiers really appreciated the efforts of Toc H members, he did also feel some reassurance in the response of soldiers' to Talbot House. He wrote of this in mid-1941 on several occasions. In June 1941, for instance, he wrote: 'It gives me considerable pleasure to find that Toc H is so much appreciated as to sought out by

strangers in a strange town.'[414] Later, he recorded his encounter with the young Jewish soldier and concluded: 'I could not help feeling, perhaps more than ever last night, what a really excellent job the House is doing.'[415] He was heartened also to hear of Toc H efforts abroad, seemingly feeling uplifted himself at being part of an organisation he believed was promoting real good: 'Have been reading some very heartening accounts of what Toc H is doing in the army and in Prisoner of War camps in Germany.'[416]

He also saw some good in Toc H's efforts within the town. Regarding the manufacture of toys for children at Christmas, he commented: 'compared with the prices being asked in the shops in the town the toys really were dirt cheap.'[417] He also expressed his gladness at the assistance rendered to the elderly.[418]

In addition to the immediate positive effects he witnessed of his efforts, Preston's perceptions of his efforts can clearly be seen to be informed by the notion of preserving goodness in a time of conflict, and perhaps even in the hope of igniting goodness in the hearts of humankind where it had not been before. This hope is evidenced for instance in the following reflection: 'It is true we have lost our sense of community and tend to lead lonely isolated lives where home is a place next to the garage and a car and a wireless is all we need. Wonder if the common effort of the war will change us or whether we shall go back to the old selfishness and the old isolation.'[419]

As the war continued, he increasingly came to see the preservation and promotion of goodness as critical in light of the effects of war. A major area of concern as Preston saw it was the diminuation of the arts in preference of science. In 1941, he remarked that all of the county Major Scholarships were in the sciences, postulating: 'Wonder if the war and demand for technicians has had something to do with it.'[420] The following year came the news that his old college, St John's, was not offering any scholarships in English that year.[421] A month later he wrote: 'It would appear that next year there are going to be no more University students doing arts.'[422] And the following day came the comment: 'News was confirmed to-day that there are to be no more Arts' Courses after next year except for the medically unfit and for women.'[423] Such commentary on the diminution of the arts continued throughout the war.[424]

He felt more as the war went on that it was destroying much of the good which civilization had achieved. He saw this in terms of the physical world: the landscapes, ancient buildings, towns, and cities which were being destroyed. He was alarmed at the destruction of historical sites in Italy and other places. In areas not directly affected he lamented the destruction of the natural world. He was depressed at the felling of local trees for the beauty they offered the town but also because of the birdlife they served.[425] He watched as vast swathes of the countryside around him became converted for agricultural production and other wild places engraven with tank tracks where training had taken place. More alarming was the munition factory built in nearby Steeton. His unease over the effects of the project is clear:

> There in the summer sunshine lay the great sprawling mass of munitions works covering acres and acres of ground and snorting from exhaust pipes in all manner of places. On this Sabbath eve inside the barbed wire and within the circle of defence posts and little pill-boxes with their slanting-eyes, thousands of men and women were laboring to produce weapons of destruction to wipe out their fellows. It was a sight to make any man not hopelessly calloused by war sick at heart. Trains [were]…panting all evening with loads of war materials.[426]

Later he wrote: 'That works, by the way, seems to have gobbled up a good deal more of a green hill-side since I was last round that day.'[427]

More importantly however, as he saw it, was the damage being done to hearts and minds, and the inculcation of people with backward ideas over the acceptability of people to behave in such a way as war caused people to behave. He felt war was corrupting the purpose of human beings, which he saw strikingly evidenced in the aim of a group of mothers in his community to raise funds for a depth charge. 'What a thing war is!' he wrote upon hearing of the effort: 'Here are mothers making every effort to destroy life—miserable men waiting in the depth of the sea for the present Utley mothers have striven to send them. All the instincts which civilization has spent every effort to suppress are now being encouraged. Truly war has a lot to answer for. How we find ourselves exulting when thousands of the enemy are slain.'[428]

Whilst he stated a belief in an inherent goodness in humankind, he saw also a propensity towards violence that troubled him as previously illustrated in his

reflection prompted whilst reading *The Testament of Beauty.*[429] At another point, he exclaimed: 'What fascinating avenues there are for exploration by the mind! If only the world would return to sanity.'[430]

The correlation of war with mental health appears repeatedly within his contemplations; he wrote of war for instance in the following way: 'Reduce the whole business to an individual scale and we see at once an individual behaving in such a way would be certified'.[431] Another time he pondered: 'surely we are not to have to relapse into barbarism every quarter of a century of so!'[432] He regularly referred to the conflict as 'man's inhumanity to man'.[433]

Preston's views can clearly be seen to have differentiated between the perception of war as a 'mythic event' and as a 'sensory event' as is discussed by Lawrence LeShan in *The Psychology of War*. LeShan describes how the perception of war as a 'sensory event' speaks to the reality of war, whilst the perception of war as a 'mythic event': 'allows for meanings to be assigned that do not necessarily bear truth to the reality of war.'[434]

Preston saw the denial or obliteration of goodness consequent of the perception of war as a 'mythic event' as one of the 'more insidious evils of war.'[435] The disgust Preston felt at the lure of war is evidenced in the way he sets war apart in the following comment: 'civilisation attempts to bring about a more humane way of life, and then war comes and attempts to inculcate those very tendencies that civilization has tried to destroy.'[436] The concern that the conflict was destroying goodness and humanity was repeated throughout the war.[437]

The importance of this in this relation to his efforts during the war was spoken to candidly in his approach to giving the Children's Flower Service at Church:

> I tried to argue that flowers that decorated the hedges, the willow herb that decorates the slag-heaps, are indication of God's concern for beauty.....He recognises that beauty is the thing that man will be tempted to neglect and that is why He sows our hedges with flowers....From this I concluded by stressing the value of holding onto the apparently non-useful things in life-especially at times like this—the necessity of keeping up music and literature and the lovely things of life, things of which the utilitarian says, "What is the use of--?" In wartime we are more than ever in danger of allowing "whatever things are lovely" to be dismissed entirely to the wings....we should hold onto them more than ever.[438]

His religious convictions also contributed to his growing contempt for war throughout the conflict. In Preston's congregation, the pulpit was not a source from which Britain's involvement in the war was positively promoted as has been shown to have been the case in the First World War. Preston wrote at one point upon returning from church service of the: 'shocking facts and figures about the number of wars there have been in mankind's 'chequered history' which were given during the sermon.[439] He also took into account that apart from destroying the works of civilisation, war destroyed God's supreme creation, humankind, which Preston saw as an insult to the purposes of the Almighty, in addition to the intelligence of men described in the above. Later in the war, he would reflect that whilst factories could speed up production of bombs and bullets, they could not speed up production of a single human being.[440]

5.7 *Not Taking the 'Soft Option'*

In addition to seeing real worth in his efforts, he also saw his engagement with the war as requiring a great deal of exertion and consequently did not feel he was taking the soft option in making his efforts as he did although they were in some contrast to official and public exhortations that often highly placed civilian defence and industrial labour on the home front.[441]

He attended Toc H meetings or worked at Talbot House most nights of the week. Talbot House required him to spend at least part of the night on site. On those nights, he began around 10 p.m. and helped prepare meals and arrange beds for soldiers usually until around 1 a.m., before sleeping at the house for the remainder of the night. He awoke in the early morning to cycle home and ready himself for school. The arduousness of the work entailed is clear in many of his entries, one of which reads: 'Had busiest night at Toc H I have had, as yet. A dozen men in until 2:30 a.m. and the last man did not leave until 3.30 am. We must have served at least fifteen suppers between 11.30 and 1 am. Got to bed at four and up again at seven am. Feel a bit drowsy.'[442] In September 1941 he reported that: 'In the three months just gone by we had over 540 men sleeping in the house.'[443]

Moreover his efforts at Talbot House were not without some vexation: 'it is a rather tedious job sitting up with men waiting to go on leave at 2.43 AM and

making meals etc etc almost without break from 10 PM until then, and scratching fire grates out and sweeping floors. There are more congenial ways of assisting the war effort.'[444] He was not enthused to turn up at the house either when in September an outbreak of a 'skin disease' occurred amongst soldiers in Keighley.[445] He was however, more generally bothered by the level of thievery on the part of the soldiers using the house which he saw as a poor way to show appreciation for the efforts made on their behalf.[446] He was also often dismayed at hearing the topics of conversation he heard from soldiers, from 'busting men asunder' to the distance something was 'from the nearest public house'.[447] However, Preston took this as evidence of the cultivation one received in the army and therein the need for the kind of respite Toc H offered.

There was also considerable work to do to maintain the premise of Talbot House, which had been converted from a residential house for the purposes of a servicemen's rest centre. In addition to daily tasks such as cleaning and maintaining a fire, he saw to repairs, which grew increasingly difficult as rationing and shortages grew more restrictive.

He also held administrative positions within Toc H on the Central Committee in London, and locally he was at various times on the Area Election Committee,[448] Finance Committee[449] and the West Yorkshire Area Executive[450] which required meetings usually on a monthly or twice monthly basis, except for the Central Committee which required him to travel annually to London wherein he faced the difficulty of wartime train travel.[451]

Nor in days of diminished church involvement was there a lack of roles to fill within his church congregation. He was often asked to assist on Sundays and in 1944 he was asked to be on the Church Council. Later in 1944 he was asked to aid in the organising and operation of a Musical and Dramatic Society.[452]

In making these efforts he did not believe he was shirking from giving a full contribution. His efforts were carefully thought through and they were not made without considerable effort. Furthermore, his belief in the need to treat the underlying causes of the war did not ameliorate the need he felt for efforts to be made on a more practical level. The *Diary* speaks to a very earnest dedication throughout the war to do all those things civilians were admonished to do in their daily lives on the home front.

He also transferred almost all of his transportation to cycle riding, foregoing public transportation to such an extent that one occasion when he did take the bus to work he reported facing a: 'considerable amount of leg-pulling' by colleagues.[453] Transitioning to cycling as his primary means of transportation was more often than not a pleasure, especially in the summer, and often far preferable to the crowded, lengthy, and more expensive conditions the war created on public transport,[454] but in the winter conditions were often treacherous. 'Wartime winters in the Pennines were severe, with much snow' writes local historian Ian Dewhirst.[455] According to Dewhirst, the town clerk announced early in the war that that it would not be possible 'to give the usual attention to the clearance of snow from adopted roads in the Borough'.[456] Preston remarked one January of the difficulty in cycling owing to the ice which had 'frozen on in lumps and made [the roads] very dangerous.' 'But pavements', he continued, 'are even worse they are so slippery.'[457] When the thaw set in he wrote it was 'like making one's way through a canal of porridge. Several times I came off the bike'.[458] Another time he wrote: 'When a bus passes the splash is serious in the extreme. My bike and myself were plastered all over with thawing snowy slush. I think the difficulties of travel are getting me down more this year than ever before.'[459] He also suffered from exposure to cold temperatures, remarking during another wartime January: 'I almost cried from the cold on my fingers before I reached school this morning.'[460]

Cycling also presented concerns in regard to the black out. Cars overtaking were a constant source of anxiety.[461] He began to feel greater disinclination to go out after dark, especially after one accident flung him into a brick wall and another into oncoming traffic,[462]memories which stayed with him in the years to follow.[463] He was disturbed also by his father being struck by car.[464]

In addition, he went to great lengths to be frugal in his spending: 'I was very much tempted to buy a Ben Wade Pipe' he reported, 'but sadly recognized that to smoke a pipe like J.B. Priestley does not make you into J.B. Priestley, and also I was mindful of Government's official discouragement of needless spending in war time—so I refrained.'[465] His willingness to accept what he called simple pleasures though did see him take the loss of rice-puddings particularly hard, as he felt it was already a meagre 'luxury', requiring only, as he put it: 'a spot of rice, a dash of milk.'[466]

In an attempt to self-ration fuel, his household went without light in the morning, causing him to ready himself for work in near total darkness in the winter months. In addition to often reporting of the near accidents this often caused whilst shaving, the darkness in which they lived in brought a depressing atmosphere to the house. He wrote of 'light' as being one of the things which he and others would surely be grateful for as never before once the war was over.[467] He also wrote of his home often being uncomfortably cold on account of the attempt to limit the use of heating fuel. He and his wife collected pieces of wood whilst cycling to light their household fires.

Several studies have drawn attention to widespread use of both the black and, as Mark Roodhouse has termed, grey markets, regardless of socioeconomic status. Lawrence James, who has also written on the topic, tells us that 'Spivs…had plenty of middle-class customers with flexible consciences and the resources to pay for goods that had been smuggled or fallen from the backs of lorries.' During the war, James writes that 'perhaps for the first time in their history, the middle classes became accomplices in mass law-breaking.'[468] Yet Preston gives no indication that he or members of his household took part in even questionable merchantile dealings apart from his refusal to go without turn-ups on his trousers.[469] Instead, he suffered at the hands of black and grey marketeering. He was constantly wary of leaving things unattended, his bicycle in particular. He had knowledge of the theft of a number of bicycles belonging to his co-workers and neighbors. One co-worker had his cycle taken from under the porch of his house, which Preston found especially startling.[470] At the time, it seemed nothing was off-limits. Local author Len Markham writes: 'Quick-witted thieves in Bradford' even 'made off with the mayoral gold chain.'[471] Apart from outright thievery, Preston knew that some members of the population did not entirely abide regulations. He wrote of this at one point in the following way: 'there are all manner of rumours about the tricks some folk are resorting to get more than their share.'[472] Thus his comments show that his own decisions to restrict his consumption were not because he was unaware that all others did not similarly restrict theirs.

In trying to meet exhortations to limit consumption of goods and materials, whilst also carrying on with and actually expanding his activities, his daily routine often exhausted him. He often stayed up late at night mending an item

that he could not replace on account of the war and on weekends regularly took turns with his wife queuing. He became exasperated with the extra duties required of schoolmasters which were often out of line with teaching and which required him to spend a greater amount of time working on school work outside of school time. His schedule was also complicated by the care required for his live-in mother-in-law, who was by 1941 suffering quite severely from declining mental powers which required more attentive care. Although his wife was the primary care giver, it did add to his considerations of each day. Often he needed to get home so Kathleen could attend to her involvement in the war effort or do the shopping. Sometimes it meant he did the shopping.[473] His mother-in-law's residence in the household may have been partially accountable for the Preston household not taking in an evacuee, however his comments also show no indication that Preston would have been agreeable to this and in fact indicate some reluctance to the notion. Yet, the lack of any sense of guilt or remorse for not taking in an evacuee testifies to the perception of his effort as full.

These efforts culminated to the extent that already by the spring 1941 he reported feeling 'tired bodily and mentally.'[474] Later that year he wrote: 'There seems to be nothing now-a-days but one long succession of jobs—stretching out in one long unbroken line as far as the eye can see.'[475] Nights at-home he described as an 'oasis in the desert'.[476]

5.8 *Joining with Others on the Side of Right*

That Preston felt assured in the rightness of his efforts is also testified to in that he placed his efforts alongside others whom he considered to be part of the fight against enemy forces. As discussed in the introduction to this chapter, scholarly examination of the home front has given considerable attention to the relationship between the people and the war effort, with early histories describing the activity on the home front as a product of the saliency felt with conceptions projected of a 'People's War' exemplifying egalitarianism, equality of sacrifice, and national virtues, many of which were linked to historic myths surrounding the nation. Analysis along this line has also been given to efforts on the home front in regard to specific organisations, such as the Women's Land Army and Home Guard. In recent years, analysis has seen greater attention to

and emphasis on closer examination of how Britain was portrayed at the time and therein locating what it meant to be British and suggesting that these portrayals informed efforts of good citizenship and thus prompted action on the part of the populace towards the war effort.

Whilst the majority of analysis has placed emphasis on the nation in relation to the efforts made by those on the home front, other studies have looked at the importance of other categories. Examination of the way in which the Empire was imagined has expanded understanding of an identity available at the time which took in the Empire as a motivational force on the home front. Wendy Webster has shown that a People's Empire was clearly presented and emphasized within official and unofficial wartime discourse.[477]

Recently, greater attention has also been given to the relationship between the local and motivation in relation to the war effort. The local is asserted to have represented an underexplored area in regard to its influence over participation on the home front. This is exemplified in a recent journal article examining civilian blood donation during the war, wherein Nicholas Whitfield asserts: 'In what is often framed as the golden age of mass communication and mass society, locality and familiarity became priorities for a large-scale emergency medical service.'[478] Helen Jones similarly asserts that the unique identity of each town was present in the valorisation of efforts and therefore in encouraging the efforts engaged in by the local population.[479] In examination of the illicit exchange of goods and materials during the war, Mark Roodhouse's recent book also argues the local as an important category in informing how people in different regions and towns in Britain perceived the acceptability of illicit exchanges on the home front.[480]

Sociologist James Aho also presents the possibility for the local to have a strong compelling power. As Aho asserts:

> Those who believe themselves a community tend to act out of a sense of duty, love or affection toward it, with little thought of what it might cost (or benefit) them as individuals. This is because a community is experienced as my own symbolic extension. Its fate bears directly on how I feel about myself. When we prosper, I too feel expansive. When we are threatened or when we lose, I am diminished.[481]

Notably, Aho argues that community is not limited to physical proximity, but is asserted to include: 'anything held in common can serve as a basis for we-ness: shared speech, a job, religious devotion, sexual preference, a shared recreation.'[482] However, Jones contends organisations on the home front were often assembled by physical proximity, thus group identity could be compounded by joining the local and a specific organisation, such as the Home Guard.

For a time, a sense of national togetherness is clearly detected in Preston's perception of the home front. A keen listener of the news, he had surely listened to King George VI's speech in 1940 'when the conception of total effort was being forged' wherein the King stated: 'Each task, each bit of duty, however simple and domestic it may be, is part of our war.'[483] In this same way, Preston seemed to have understood and appreciated the home front as one wherein people were serving through a variety of capacities, and consequently he saw his efforts joining with others in a very real way. This is attested to in his regular references to 'we' early in the war. Furthermore, he did not denigrate the efforts of others, and in fact made considerate remarks towards those serving in different capacities than himself, such as civilian defence volunteers and workers. He lamented on a rainy Easter Monday in 1942 what a shame the inclement weather was as: 'it was the only day's holiday the war-workers have been allowed.'[484] His sense of togetherness within the nation in the early years of the war was also strongly rooted in the equality of sacrifice he perceived. He wrote in early 1941: 'Have not had much of a holiday, but then how can one, with munition workers and others hard at it, even on Christmas day! We shall take our ease only after the big job is finished—if we live so long.'[485]

This sense of unity is also attested to in the mutual weight of responsibility to which he testified feeling. On a National Day of Prayer in early 1942 he wrote:

> I could not help wondering in Church this morning what generations yet unborn will think of us who are having to bear the burden and the heat of the day....If we survive, and I am confident we shall, will future generations, striving to enter imaginatively into our sufferings, regard us as super-men, and doubt their own capacity to bear a similar burden? I wonder, and yet the majority of men and women will never be conscious of their heroism. For most of us it is just a grim hanging on from day to day with none of the fierce exultation of battle to warm the blood and set the pulses racing.[486]

His aforementioned comment illustrates that whilst he saw the population joining together, he did not feel as Calder asserts some did during the war that: 'the existence of a common goal, to achieve what meant, increasingly, sharing and sharing alike, gave many people young and old, a proud and even gay motive for existence.'[487]

This sense of unity was bolstered by his perception of the effort being made throughout the local region as well. Everywhere he travelled in the locality showed signs of the war—ammunitions stores lined the roadside, look-out posts and anti-aircraft guns were nestled amongst the heather across the moors, and nearby fields were clearly used as tank training ground. He also knew that Yorkshire cities were being bombed, that Royal Air Force stations in Yorkshire sent bombers abroad, and that ships left Hull to deliver supplies to Russia once an alliance between Britain and Russia took shape.[488] Although his town was not amongst those targeted for attack, he saw Keighley and the locality disrupted to a great extent and wholly oriented to the war. Keighley had also been receiving evacuees and refugees since before the war began, and Preston had worked with others to find supplies to meet the needs of those individuals. Thus, as Noakes asserts, one did not have to be a Londoner to see themselves as part of a country at war.[489]

Although he did make regular references to 'we' in clear relation to the nation, he is ambiguous as to whether he means we in England, or we in Britain. He often phrases the collective as 'we in this country'. Yet he refers to himself exclusively as an Englishman. He mentions soldiers of various British nationalities stationed in Keighley, including those from Northern Ireland and Scotland[490] but gives no indication of any thought as to topics surrounding a sense of Britishness; he neither delineated any features, nor gave his feelings towards the union of nations. What it meant to be British was not something with which he actively engaged.

The absence of the category is perhaps telling as it could be read as indicative of his own privileged place within Britain at a time when England was often used to denote Great Britain.[491] He was also ancestrally English and therefore his status as an authentic Britain would have been unquestioned. He was also a

member of the Church of England which may also have conferred a sense of being an authentic member of the nation. Despite whether these factors offered a secure sense of his place in the wider British nation, making the category an uncontested one for Preston, his national identity seems to have been somewhat taken for granted within his contemplations at the time. It is perhaps also notable that his own seeming disinterest in Britishness or nationalism and the qualities surrounding it, or to question it in any way, was possibly a reflection of the space with which he was most concerned—the literary world. According to Bernhard Rieger, up to 1940: 'British writers were remarkably uninterested in the issue of national identity'.[492]

Consequently, evidence does not suggest that the delineating features of the nation in the sense of either England or Britain were compellingly forces in shaping his initial efforts. This is illustrated in his choice not to join a civilian defence organisation although considerable emphasis was placed in cultural products on the male civilian's historical role in defending Britain from outside threats.[493] He was similarly uncompelled by assertions in the local newspaper of Keighley's historic ability to marshal its human resources towards any declared aim; in the wartime context this became focused on membership in civilian defence and other war-related organisations, as well as local drives. Preston was unmoved by local drives and contributed little to them. When he did contribute at one point to the war bond drive, he made clear that his participation was not for the stated aim of the drive, but rather because he understood it as an effort by the government to keep inflation low.[494]

Neither did what he recognised as criticism of his efforts dissuade him. He seemed unmoved to hear a soldier on leave complaining over the lack of Keighley volunteers for civilian defence. Nor did he contemplate volunteering as a means to counter the criticism he perceived towards school teachers, rather he joined more strongly with other teachers in feeling that teaching was becoming 'a sweated profession'.[495] Already by 1941 he wrote of hearing of a teacher who had the numbers in her class swelled to 50 as a result of the war. In solidarity with other teachers, he rhetorically asked: 'Then people wonder why children who have left school do not show more evidence of having received some form of education.'[496] Nor did he discuss the criticisms he

certainly heard of teachers more generally, especially those who were less than ardent in their zeal for war. Teachers were particularly hit hard with accusations of subversiveness. Sonya Rose gives an example of one 'stridently hostile article', which was titled 'Pacifists and Pansies', and discussed how school masters often used their job to spread 'poison in the minds of the nation's children'.[497] Across the country there were numerous city and town councils that dismissed conscientious objectors from their teaching positions. The North Riding Education Committee, for instance, voted to suspend a teacher without pay out of a concern for: 'What would be thought if a C.O. were to stand in front of a class of children whose relatives had gone to fight for their King and country?' In nearby Leeds, a woodworking teacher was dismissed for refusing to show boys how make toy battleships.[498]

Where he did judge between efforts made towards the war, which he came to do, was primarily in terms of the selfishness of others in terms of excessive consumption or inadequate work. Thus, whilst at the beginning of 1941 his comments reflected a perception of equal sacrifice and determined effort,[499] in time this perception was fractured by reports of those who lawfully or unlawfully obtained more than their "fair share" and workers slacking and/or supposedly taking advantage of the system. Early in 1942 he wrote of being informed by Toc H colleagues of:

> the iniquitous payments that are being made for the most ridiculous jobs. Men apparently are earning £12 a week for laying pipes....This they explained was due to some sort of percentage basis upon which firms are paid by the government. It appears that the firms are paid a percentage on the total wage bill and it was therefore obviously in their interests to make their wages as high as possible. They were telling tales also of men supposed to be engaged on vital war work settling down in and out of the way places for quiet games of cards. It was stated that at this place Steeton people have been seen pretending to drill holes in places where holes have already been drilled. There is no wonder that some have so much money that they can buy presents for whole rows of houses and that Latham's house on Ferncliffe Drive can be let furnished at 10 per week. There is no wonder either that the war costs over £12,000,000 a day....Yet there are men in the army doing the same job as these £12 a week folk on a soldiers pay. Where is the equality of sacrifice?[500]

Not long after this he reported: 'There does not appear the sense of urgency at home either that will make for a speedy winning of the war. Stories about

slacking and absenteeism in workshops are very numerous and the government is even considering stopping boxing matches and greyhound racing.'[501]

Those whom Preston criticised for selfishness were not limited to a specific socio-economic category. His middle-class neighbours, holiday makers, and the indulgent wealthy were as roundly criticised as slacking workers. His disapproval of the middle classes is evident in his remark: 'News to-night that people have fought to get on trains going to the sea-side and into the country.'[502] He was also thoroughly incensed by the selfish and needless spending he witnessed on the part of his neighbours.[503] However, it is not certain that his criticism of selfishness was because of it running contrary to national virtues, so much as a virtue generally. Whilst moral virtues were regularly discussed, national virtues were an ambiguous category in the diary. Although his criticism of others could be read as implicit that he felt he upheld his duties as a member of the nation, his comments also indicate that he saw his efforts joining with a wider population than the nation in promoting the good. Good behaviour was a condition of personhood, not of nationality. However, as part of a national collective he did certainly see himself, however blurred the lines, and when members of that collective behaved badly he did feel it diminished the collective, and at times this saw him discouraged. But never did discouragement at others' actions dissuade him from his own. Lack of church attendance still saw him attend church. His perception of the diminishment of moral and ethical concerns did not discourage him from striving for a more moral and ethical world as part of his war effort. Others' apparent lack of concern for the violence and suffering which war induced did not cause him to see the devastation wrought by war as he saw it any less horrific.

In the early stages of war, the appreciation he had for variety of effort contributed to him feeling part of the wider effort even though he did not join with many of the more popular aspects of the war effort. When conflict was faced, an important sustaining element was his appreciation for the variety of efforts being made in the war effort. Importantly, however, this was not just in terms of within his own country, but in terms of the international effort. This is relational to his perception of the war as one wherein the aims were not limited to national defence or a national agenda, but which concerned wider concerns

for concepts not bound by or limited to national borders—Christian kindliness, artistic expression, human goodness, and harmony. He saw himself as joining in the fight against tyranny wherein many peoples from around the world were contributing in an untold variety of ways. He often commented on the efforts of others around the world and of how others were suffering to prosecute the war. This 'imagined community', as Benedict Anderson phrased it,[504] of a side of right was especially compelling, as it was seen as without borders or nation. Those fighting against tyranny even included, at least some, Preston felt, of the people from within Axis states themselves.

In his perception of the importance of the effort as an international one, the Empire is conspicuously absent in relation to either specific Empire nations, or the entity as a whole, in his entries. In examinations of wartime identity, the Empire has been especially considered for its evocative power during the war as offering an identity which conferred the feeling of belonging to a community of nations joining together in common cause. Webster has shown that significant efforts were made by the government to portray Britain and the Empire as united in ideology and efforts, and to imbue an in-group feeling between nations.[505]

Apart from his comments about the soldiers from Empire countries, primarily Canadians, who visited Talbot House, the Empire is discussed within the *Diary* only in terms of the appropriateness of Empire and the economic and moral implications for Empire upon Britain and Empire peoples. Not only did he not see the preservation of the Empire as a legitimate war aim, he also did not seem to feel a particular affinity with peoples from the Empire, nor see the Empire as a uniquely special entity within the Allied forces. His increasing disagreement with the apparatus of imperialism generally and the negative light in which he viewed the effects of the British Empire upon British society may serve as an explanation for his lack of engagement with the topic. Furthermore, he never mentioned having listened to the programmes on the wireless or viewing the films which Webster and Summerfield show were thoughtfully designed to foster a shared identity between Empire peoples. Not in any way does it seem a sense of a People's Empire was fostered. A remark upon hearing the comments of one Australian speaker on a wireless programme near the end of the war gives telling insight into the lack of affinity with the Empire

which had been cultivated by the war. Of the speaker's comments Preston wrote plaintively: 'Apparently the Australian is very touchy on the subject of his country. He must be a different kind of person for the Englishmen to get to know.'[506] This comment also reflects that even near the end of the war, one's country was not an entity wherein he felt it was right to give too much attention. Earlier in the war, he had also addressed the notion of national identity when, after hearing the sermon of a visiting pastor that to Preston seemed stridently nationalistic, he indicated that the pastor's nationalism seemed curious and even distasteful.

Is it possible that Preston gives some indication that placing the category of nation at the forefront of scholarly examination of the home front experience is a reflection of concern in recent years for the concept of nation following Britain's integration in the European Union, multi-culturalism, stronger assertions of regional identity, and the Scottish Referendum? Or is possibly a reflection of the allure to modern researchers of wartime messages stressing unity in public and official discourse which were often rendered in striking artistic representations in a variety of media?[507] Is the absence of conceptualising the nation in Preston's efforts indication that he took the concept for granted because as neither a non-minority or displaced part of the nation he did not feel contestation within the nation which would have brought questions surrounding it to the fore? This seems possible, however the degree to which conceptions of the nation went unstated when so many other aspects of his perceptions are discussed, often in great detail, supports the argument that national identity was not on the forefront of his mind and that conceptualising the nation was not a significant factor of his wartime experience. To place national identity as the interpretive nexus of Preston's war experience would be to miss the opportunity to explore those ideas which were being more actively grappled with and which did shape his wartime experience as he understood it.

5.9 *Wartime Citizenship*

In this way, Preston's perception of why and how to place his efforts is at some variance with many historians' depiction and conceptualisation of what served to motivate those on the home front which has largely equated national identity with good citizenship, thus setting up aspects of good citizenship as ideal

national characteristics which individuals sought to have and by which they measured one another's efforts on the home front. Agreement is found here with Hinton who argues that the primary focus within historical discourse on notions of good citizenship in relation to classical republican notions of citizenship on the home front is a misinterpretation of understandings of good citizenship, and therefore of understandings of good personhood available at the time. This limits understandings surrounding citizenship, and therefore good personhood, held at the time to that of the classical republican tradition stressing sacrifice and civic virtue. Within home front analysis, Hinton's *Nine Wartime Lives* is exceptional for its inclusion of discussion of the different notions of citizenship, and fulfilment of good personhood, available at the time. As Hinton describes: 'Built into the deepest sources of modern Western selfhood there was a tension between a classical [republican] tradition which located human dignity primarily in the public excercise of citizenship, and a Christian sensibility which saw the cultivation of a more private communion with God as the core of personhood.' Hinton's further elaboration of this point is helpful: 'The Reformation made explicit an affirmation of ordinary life (domesticity, work as a vocation) as a source of individual fulfilment that had always been implicit in the Christian tradition, contesting the classical restriction of fully human status to members of the polis.'[508]

Whilst Rose identifies that varying notions of citizenship were available—that of a classical republican tradition, *as well as a more liberal interpretation of citizenship which emphasised individual rights*—Rose's analysis, as with historians from Titmuss onward, gives primacy to the classical republican tradition which was officially and publicly supported during the war. Rose justifies the appropriateness of placing the classical republican tradition as the dominant conceptual schema in relation to citizenship, and therefore good personhood, at the time, and therefore sets it up as an interpretive category, by explaining:

> In the 1940s, in the specific context of war, especially one following close on the heels of an economic depression, there was a dramatic shift away from valorizing individual interest and preserving individual liberty to emphasizing the common good. It was within this framework that Government, the press, and members of the public stressed the obligations of good citizenship—obligations or responsibilities that included upholding moral standards, actively demonstrating loyalty and

> national commitment by volunteer efforts and fulfilling those state-enforced obligations concerned with military defence.[509]

Subsequently, much historical analysis has measured civilian dedication to the war effort in as much as civilians adhered to republican notions of good citizenship stressing duty to the state. Thus emphasis has revolved around identifying and exploring aspects of national values and traits exemplifying or encouraging duty to the state. Noakes has especially set up this interpretive dynamic between the 'alliance to the state' and the projection of a national identity which 'appealed to the widest possible number of people'.[510]

In Preston however, we see greater complexity in understandings of citizenship and good personhood held at the time. As discussed in the previous chapter, the primacy of the individual was a major point of debate in Preston's time and one which he likely took an interest in as many of those taking part in the national debate were individuals who Preston followed—individuals such as Archbishop William Temple and Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin. It was also a very visible category in inter-war literature and was joined by debates over the proper role of government. In Preston's efforts (and the beliefs directing those efforts) the presence of this much wider debate over the ways in which selfhood and good personhood were defined which had begun even prior to the war is evident, as is a clear resistance on Preston's part to allowing the state to control projections of the duties of the individual at the time, especially as those projections were so clearly in line with the classic republican tradition with which Preston took issue. His opposition to this understanding of good personhood was both explicitly articulated and indirectly evidenced in his actions throughout the war. The issue arose early within the diary: 'The idea that human life has a significance only as it is expended in the service of the state—it is a horrible thought that free peoples should have to resist such an attribute.'[511]

Tension over exhortations that people had a duty to the state and should find fulfilment in good citizenship is present throughout the *Diary*. Initially he met the presentations put on by the Ministry of Information at the school with acceptance: 'Had a good show this afternoon from Ministry of Information—talkies on various war efforts. Some lovely shots of English countryside showing what we are fighting for.'[512] Quickly, however, most forms of propaganda and

many of the government's actions were much less well received. Despite his sincere desire to serve the war effort, he came to react almost with hostility to being directed by government at all levels, and in almost any regard. By mid-1941 he had already began to loathe the Ministry's presentations at KBGS for their patronising tone. He also disliked the minute direction received from government which contrasted with the stern leadership others appeared to desire, of which Calder described: 'One observer summed up the popular attitude as being "Tell us to cut our throats, for goodness' sake, and we'll cut them; but not until you tell us to."'[513]

Preston often treated government exhortations by pointing out how slyly manipulative they were. The deep concern he felt over what he perceived to be the channelling of people's thoughts through manipulation was matched by his concern over the extension of State power, such as was seen early in the war in Regulation 18B. His concern over State power is evident, for instance, in the following comment: 'Sir Kingsley Wood has been congratulating the tax-payer on the efforts he has made. This is of course a fiction which everybody understands. The poor devil of a tax-payer has no choice but to make an effort. If he does not allow himself to be bled white he would soon know about it.'[514] Of similar 'praise' from the Chancellor of the Exchequer over the population having followed government exhortations so well, Preston expressed: 'This praise may be all very well for a purpose of this kind, but these bureaucrats of ours will, no doubt, in the future, put upon us all manner of bureaucratic curtailments of our personal liberties and praise us for accepting tamely what we either have not the opportunity or thoughts to resist energetically.'[515]

He found great accord with a talk on the wireless in the spring of 1941 which spoke to a more liberal interpretation of good personhood emphasising the primacy of the individual in society and the indeterminacy of state power in relation to the individual:

> Speaker...based his optimism on belief that there is a power in world outside ourselves and not ourselves making for righteousness which will never permit the philosophy of the ant-heep to triumph. It is in the spirit of free men that speaker saw hope for mankind. Speaker pointed out that we believe that state was created for man and not reverse, that a man has a right to freedom of conscience and speech, in equality of all men before the law, in justice tempered by equality. Mussolini stated that there should be nothing above the state, nothing outside the state,

> nothing against the state. We believe in the individual's right to question and so allow conscientious objectors affirmation instead of the oath, the right of minorities to contract out in the matter of religious education. It was a heartening talk.[516]

Preston's rejection of an understanding of good personhood which was in line with the classical republical tradition of good citizenship can also be seen in the encouragement he felt hearing Joad speak against:

> the fallacious idea, so strong at present time, that the state has some kind of life of its own which transcends and which must transcend all individual rights. He shattered fairly successfully I thought the analogy between anatomy and its individual members and the body and its limbs and organs. Unlike the individual in the state, the organs, limbs etc. can have no significance apart from the body whereas the individual has an existence apart from the state.[517]

Nor did he see state projections of good citizenship in the classical republican tradition as necessary to fulfilling worthwhile participation in the war effort. His denial of the need to serve in civilian defense is illustrative of this understanding. Rather he saw his effort through Toc H as being much more beneficial to the war effort. Neither did he trust in the government to direct the individual in the best way. This was highlighted early in the war when the Ministry of Health took over the Citizens Advice Bureau which Toc H had established and operated. He looked at how well it had been set up and was operated, and noted that once the material which Toc H had donated had been removed prior to the transfer of control to the Ministry of Health how little would be left and was angered that the paid man which Toc H had hired to man the bureau would be dismissed. This testified, as he saw, it to the mistakenness of government assertions of efficiency since the CAB would have to be built up again with state funds. The government's handling over the matter caused him to express: 'National emergency is an excuse for every kind of tyranny' and to chalk up the incident as 'one more municipal deft.'[518]

Indeed, he saw bureaucratic inefficiencies throughout the war which undermined his trust in both national and local government processes and procedures, writing at one point that the nation was 'being hag-ridden with bureaucracy.'[519] In addition to the tyranny and ineptness he saw in many bureaucratic processes, his antipathy and distrust of local officials was compounded upon witnessing what he perceived to be misconduct for himself,

as well as hearing ‘tales about Town officials’ who held lavish banquets, causing him to remark that such conduct amongst officials during war time was ‘disgraceful’.[520]

As indicated above, he was clearly annoyed at what he saw as the cumbersome and inept means by which bureaucracy at all levels implemented wartime policies. He saw the growth of bureaucracy as an ominous sign for the future, and came to wonder whether liberties would be restored, and to doubt the appropriateness of governance by means of such a bureaucratic apparatus as has been created during the war.[521]

Therefore, whilst Preston adhered to government exhortations in regard to rationing since he saw for himself that such measures were good and necessary, he did not look to the state to inform his efforts so as to offer him a sense of good personhood through fulfilment of a publicly emphasized version of good citizenship stressing duty to the state.

5.10 *War Culture*

In contrast to Preston’s response to official and unofficial attempts to promote a certain version of wartime citizenship, these same exhortations and evocations have been held by some historians to have held a strong compelling power over the population. Rae informs: ‘ “War culture” was pervasive and existed in many forms including documentaries, propaganda films, as well as literature and radio broadcasts.’ Because of the pervasiveness of war culture Rae asserts it: ‘exerted a dominant hegemonic force.’[522] In a similar way many historians contend popular cultural products held significant meanings in the wartime national consciousness and understandings of almost every aspect of life as it related it related to the war—gender, morality, beauty, national values, perception of the enemy, and so on.

Mark Connelly makes a particularly strong argument for the interpretation of cultural products as representative of the national consensus during the war because of the ‘sheer homogeneity of its popular cultural artefacts.’ Wartime cultural products, argues Connelly: ‘contained an inbuilt value system recognized and understood by the British people.’[523] The ‘inbuilt value system’ Connelly refers to is often discussed in terms of the national myths evoked

during the war and national values represented within them. Angus Calder discusses the most salient of these myths in his study *The Myth of the Blitz*, which Connelly's more recent work largely attempts to counter. Noakes and Rose also strongly assert the representativeness of cultural products. Rose contends cultural products—novels, films, posters, and radio programmes—were: 'contributions to the cultural representations and meanings that were available to the people on the home front. These representations were central to the political culture of wartime Britain which, in turn, framed how British citizens experienced the war and made sense of those experiences.'[524]

Whilst the degree to which cultural products should be taken as representative is questionable, it can be stated with certainty that during the war cultural products were used to excert certain pressures upon the individual. Indeed Hinton describes that the pressures were greater than in any other time in British history upon individuals to: 'shape their lives as dutiful citizens'.[525] Therefore, how is it that Preston was able to maintain his own course against the heavy weight of dominant streams of knowledge?

5.11 *Convictions*

In addition to understandings of citizenship/good personhood held at the time, the philosophical concept of 'well-placed self-trust' bears importantly on exploring Preston's understanding of his engagement with the war effort. From Andrea C. Westlund's discussion of Greg Scherkoske's arguement concerning integrity as a social epistemic virtue, rather than as a moral virtue, we learn that:

> Well-placed self-trust...involves a disposition to recognize and rely appropriately on [his/]her own epistemic capacities and expertise, along with a disposition to defer selectively and appropriately to the expertise and skill of others. This interplay between self and other highlights the social element of integrity as a social epistemic virtue.

Furthermore, Westlund adds: 'Scherkoske argues that integrity is expressed not in fidelity to one's convictions per se but, rather, in fidelity to the aim of having only defensible convictions that are worth acting on and affirming to others.' It is important also, as Westlund notes, that these convictions are: 'reasoned and refined through critical reflection and arguement with others.'[526]

In understanding the connection of integrity and well-placed self trust to Preston's efforts, the work of psychologist Kenneth Pargament on coping also bears importance. When coping, Pargament states: 'people do not face stressful situations without resources. They rely on a system of beliefs, practices, and relationships, which affects how they deal with difficult situations. In the coping process, this orienting system is translated into concrete situation-specific appraisals, activities, and goals.'[527]

In coping with the difficult situations the war presented to Preston, in order to orient himself in 'concrete situation-specific appraisals, activities, and goals' Schoerske's discussion surrounding integrity shows that in orienting himself, Preston not only made decisions based on his convictions, but they were convictions which he was able to explain and defend to himself and to others. Through Preston's use of the *Diary* to contemplate his engagement with the war, and his many references therein to having discussed, and in some cases defended his position with others, it can be appropriately argued that rather than relinquishing his own accountability by subscribing to dominate streams of knowledge, Preston saw himself as accountable for his views and actions and personally deliberated upon and determined the best course of action.

Important here is how he reasoned his views, to which the work of Spilka et al. adds an important consideration: 'the attributions of intrinsically religious individuals differ from those who are extrinsically oriented.' This, Spilka et al. describe by drawing from the work of Peter Benson, a scholar known for extensive research on what he terms 'mature faith'. This concept, Spilka et al. explains, 'has much in common with Allport's Intrinsic religious orientation—namely, a deep religious commitment that includes social sensitivity and "life-affirming values".' Spilka et al. continue: 'In mature faith...a healthy lifestyle is combined with an appreciation of human welfare, equality, personal responsibility and what sounds like the role of faith in everyday life.'[528]

It is notable here, that in locating sources of motivation for individuals on the homefront, Hinton's is one of the few studies to locate that in some cases religious beliefs served as a source of sustenance for their active engagement with the war effort.[529] Through Preston's pre-war training, both secularly and religiously, in speech and debate, as well as his interest in literary criticism, his

concern for the good, his appreciation for the role an individual could play in another's life and the life of a community, the maturity of his faith, and his increasing tendency to question the rationality of the thoughts and behaviours of those around him and instead look to more careful and thoughtful examination for understanding, he was able to maintain a sense of well-placed self trust and integrity, despite his views varying from, and in some cases running contrary to, the dominant discourse of the time.

Moreover, as with understandings of citizenship, Preston also underlines that the views put forward in the majority of cultural products were not the only meanings available, nor the only way individuals framed their experiences. For instance, historically rooted evocations represented in popular and government cultural products were largely uncompelling to Preston. Dunkirk, held as one of the most compelling of all wartime myths, was hardly mentioned by Preston and when it was it was referred to as having been a disaster. Nor did he indicate that significant positive feeling towards the events of Dunkirk were more widely present with those who he came into contact. He spoke plainly about an instance when soldiers came in and 'yawned' about Dunkirk at Talbot House—the mention of which came only because the soldiers' discussion kept him from being able to get to bed and because of the notable disgust the soldiers expressed over the handling of the evacuation. He recalled that the soldiers had spoken of the ridiculousness they felt over being made whilst waiting on the beach to be evacuated to salute at full attention every officer encountered because the military high command felt this would be good for morale.[530] Yet in the local paper the involvement of a local man who was present at the evacuation was heroically recounted. These different versions of the way the event was understood and discussed are illustrative of the variety of meanings available at the time, and also of the difference between formal communications such as the press and media, and individual cognition and informal communication amongst co-workers, friends, and neighbours of the same events and phenomena.

Regardless of the specific myth being evoked, projections of Britain's role in the war were largely undermined and disallowed from being conceived in positive terms as a result of Preston's increasing perception of war as a sensory event. Whatever the cause or circumstance, for humanity to have brought itself to war

was a failure in and of itself in Preston's eyes. Although he saw that events were such that the Allied nations had no alternative but to resist Axis forces through military means, he still saw war itself as organised mass murder and felt that the circumstances and individual culpability in regard to the causation of war were no small matters.

Furthermore, Preston's contact with soldiers at Talbot House also saw his respect for the humanity of soldiers' increase which had the effect of adding to his sensory perception of war. The disjuncture he saw between reality and mythic representations of the war can be read in his comments surrounding Prime Minister Churchill's speech on defending Singapore to the last man. Furthermore, it is notable he felt sympathy for soldiers on all sides of the conflict—he saw all of them, friend or foe, as tools in a system which used them as he would write repeatedly throughout the war as 'cannon fodder'.[531]

In the above interpretations of events we see Preston was able to come to perceptions out-of-line with dominant social streams of knowledge as a result of having entered the war with a wide variety of reference points by which to interpret events, from notions of good personhood, to the value of humanity imbued through his relationship with Christianity, and the positive relationship he perceived between humanity and the arts. In this way, he was not limited to social knowledge that was generated during the conflict and was able to approach that knowledge more critically.

What the vast preponderance of wartime cultural products which have been left from the conflict do tell us with certainty is, as Calder stated, that as a result of the total nature of the war, it was felt by members of the Government that they must sell to the people, and in the best way possible: 'the commodities and attitudes which it thought were good for them.'[532] Preston recognised the intent of this in much of the official exhortations made to the public, seeing to an extent the necessity of it in the context of the war. In the *Diary* he noted this often. He wrote on one instance: 'It is rather amusing to note the propaganda on our own wireless. We are told to-night how good potatoes, carrots and oatmeal are for us" which he recognised was "because they are plentiful." '[533] In other words, he saw propaganda for what it was, and largely accepted the wartime exigency of it. He also perceived the power of Prime Minister Churchill's

rhetoric, writing: ‘No-one else has seized the public’s imagination as Churchill has.’[534] Yet, he listened with a filtered ear, it was wartime and he understood the necessity of it, but it didn’t mean that he wholly accepted the messages put forward. Rather he tolerated them because of his conviction in the goodness of the cause. He, for example, saw that it was necessary for the population to ration heating fuels, food stuffs, and materials which were to be converted for military use to as to allow for their utilization in the war effort.

He also dedicated himself to the war effort as a result of perceiving Britain as being on higher moral footing than the enemy, and he, therefore, as has been discussed, subsequently saw a moral duty to give his efforts. He also saw his own situation in the context of what was going on in other countries and what other populations were having to endure, such as in occupied Europe and in Russia and therefore tried not to murmur publicly so as to show recognition for his own good fortune. For this reason he disapproved of hearing others complain, feflecting at one instance: ‘I wonder if any of them trouble to think that in Germany…[they] might be now in a concentration camp for having said something to [their] kin that could be construed into criticism of the powers that be.’[535]

Despite his desire to not complain publicly of wartime matters with which he disagreed, he remained committed to not simply adhering to the most dominant streams of discourse. His efforts to encourage self-reflection through the arts and religious belief can be read in relation to this, as can his desire to maintain the *Diary* so as to set down those thoughts he felt he could not express publicly. He also felt it especially necessary to prevent a loss of individual consciousness in and amongst a growing sense of ‘the masses’. The transformation of the people into the masses was something he saw as having gained strength through the interwar years, in movements characterized by Thomson as being the result of: ‘apparently irrational demagoguery, xenophobic nationalism, and extremism’.[536] Preston also saw that this was evident in wartime society in such phenomena as the significant change in local and national opinion upon Russia’s entry into the war. Here we see how heavily he filtered government propaganda and public, including local, representations. The large degree of public support for Russia, as it was to take shape, Preston perceived as a shameful about-face on the part of the British public and willful denial of reality

of the situation. While he acknowledged the tremendous efforts made by the Russian people and soldiers of the Red Army, his personal sentiment towards Russian policies and socialistic infrastructure remained wholly in tact. In fact the distinct 'war culture' Rae speaks of, seemed to have encouraged Preston to keep the sudden warmth in feeling for Russia by many in Britiain, including many politicians, at arms length—he sensed something artificial in it and felt the distinct impression he was being sold to on the matter.

Preston was also simply at times unimpressed with the quality of wartime cultural output, such as the popular radio programmes *It's That Man Again*[537] and skits by Cyril Fletcher,[538] as well as the majority of wartime films. Where, for some, the very appeal of figures such as Mrs Miniver was in that these figures told them what to do and informed the population of how they should interpret their own experience, these were the very same attributes Preston despised and distrusted. He turned instead to psychology, philosophy, literature, and religion to provide him the tools to analyse for himself the situation and how to feel about it. To be told how to feel Preston saw as chains worse than a gulag, or dictates of tyrant, and he did not want to be a willing victim.

Therefore, in addition to treating government exhortations with some caution, he similarly questioned popular social discourse. Furthermore, he continued to be informed by a wide range of sources, and in doing so, Preston gives some indication of the possibility of the wide range of understandings on the part of the civilian population of events and phenomena. While Rae rightly informs us the war influenced the tone and content of much of the cultural products available, Preston illustrates that there were still readily sought and available sources which were not orientated to influencing public opinion in these same ways. These other sources included literary publications, wireless programmes, and even church sermons.

Therefore, throughout the war, whilst actions of the government and population were not insignificant areas, they cannot be said to have been preeminent in informing, guiding, or sustaining Preston's initial efforts. His pre-war life and personal value system (informed through engagement with numerous sources) served as a guide to, and at times as a bulwark against, the influence of the times. His own well-reasoned convictions acted as an interpretive lens which

offered intelligibility to the events around him, and his own well-reasoned belief in the goodness of his efforts strongly compelled him in his own actions. In his efforts he strove to fulfil his duties as he saw them of a moral being. In addition to his past experiences and education, during the war the attention he gave to religion, literature, philosophical and psychological reading, which served as reference points to guide him and he looked to these for continued negotiation throughout the war. These were often in what have been seen as smaller, more marginalized sources in historical analysis of the war, as for example in literary periodicals, and philosophical works both written and broadcast by figures well known in their day, as well as more obscure individuals. He sought spaces of all kinds where the day's situations were considered and debated in order to better understand them for himself, but he did not merely subscribe to the view which arose as dominent. The discussions and talks Preston listened to and read often caused him to question his views and perceptions and to think upon things in a different way, yet, in other instances he was confirmed in his views. His understanding of the home front and his place in it cannot be said then to have been derived from one particular ideology or seen within an exact, definable framework or mould. He assimilated his internal point of view with other areas—artistic, academic, religious, political, and ethical—so as to give the best effort as he could perceive in the situation. This internal point of view with respect to world around him allowed him to function in a situation he understood was contested and fractured socially and which was physically and emotionally trying.

It does not appear that because his efforts were out of line with dominant social representations, this diminished the belief in, or energy he gave to, his efforts on the home front. Because of this, his call-up to Home Guard in mid-1942, and the subsequent proceedings, proved a profound shock to Preston's understandings and caused him to re-evaluate his efforts, the belief system from which the efforts were predicated upon, and the wider situation in which he was located.

CHAPTER 6 Negotiating the Home Front: Conflict and Cohesion in Selfhood and Community

6.1 *Introduction*

Preston's mandatory participation in civilian defence,[539] first in fire-watching and then in Home Guard (HG), proved significant points of negotiation in his wartime experience. Because each represented a new space, especially HG, civilian defence participation saw him consider anew aspects of the home front and his and others' participation on it. In the last chapter it was argued that Preston's understanding of the war effort did not conceive that worthy service on the home front required civilian defence service. However, mandatory participation in HG brought forceful attention to the differences in Preston's perceptions of how best to engage with the war effort and the ways others in society perceived worthwhile participation. Moreover, his selfhood was tested by being placed in a position where he was required to engage in activities which were in vastly different capacities from those to which he was accustomed, many of which were not only out of his intellectual comfort zone, but were also physically trying. These elements combined with his interaction with the other men in his unit—all of whom were younger than he and worked as industrial labourers—to confront his own sense of masculine identity. Furthermore, that the men he served alongside in HG were all industrial labourers brought attention to the issues of sociability, community, and class perceptions.

Thus the considerations prompted by his experience in civilian defence represent critical sites of experience on the home front which contributed significantly to Preston's conceptualisation of himself, himself within society, and changing aspects of British society. Moreover, although he had to significantly reduce his participation in Toc H and other community-based organisations, he did continue to participate in these organisations in as much as he could parallel to his service in HG. Therefore, whilst this chapter enters into debates surrounding civilian defence in connection with selfhood and masculinity, his civilian defence participation also offered a new vantage point from which Preston considered community and class on the home front, enabling him to compare and contrast aspects of different forms of service amongst peoples of differing socio-economic groups.

The implications of civilian defence upon the individual and upon society have been identified as important areas in connection with the home front in scholarly analysis. Whilst the specifics of organisation and training of, and service rendered by, HG has been most explored through military histories, the treatment given to HG and other uniformed civilian organisations in social and cultural historical examination, which will be discussed more fully shortly, has been primarily concerned with the meanings and understandings which HG represented of wartime notions of valorised forms of service on the home front, as well towards sites of class amelioration, and how HG in particular was representative of 'Britishness'.

Examination of Preston's experience will be explored in terms of the impact civilian defence service had on his sense of masculine identity and of offering worthwhile service on the home front, as well as how his service affected his sense of locality, community, and sociability. As with the previous chapter discussion will seek to place Preston's experiences within the wider situation and will focus on exploring how his experience prompted changes to his understandings of himself, his community, and wider society.

6.2 *Fire-watching*

Preston's involvement in civilian defence first came in April 1942 in the form of mandatory fire-watching. He was to serve at the school in which he worked, where his colleagues were also to serve as fire-watchers. He met the announcement of fire-watching at a staff-meeting with slight indignation. The opposition he felt towards fire-watching appears to have stemmed from the needlessness with which he perceived the effort.[540] He noted the night his watch duty was to begin that it was a year to the day since London had been seriously bombed. The hollowness of the effort was further emphasised to him by the lack of equipment with which they were provided. Laden with sarcasm, he had written earlier in the war of his feelings towards the provision of protective equipment at the school: 'We have received our stirrup-pump to-night and so now we are fully equipped to combat the malice of the enemy.'[541]

Preston's call-up was mirrored nationally and locally. According to Calder: 'all men who worked less than sixty hours a week...had to undertake compulsory

fire-watching for roughly one whole night a week, unless they were already civil defenders or Home Guard.'[542] Nor was he alone in his reticence towards it. According to Dewhirst: 'In Keighley 95 percent of those thought eligible for fire-watching tried initially to claim exemption.'[543]

However, despite his oppositional views Preston did not try to claim exemption; his reticence was seemingly tempered by the inclusiveness of the effort wherein his co-workers, including the headmaster, were also compelled to take part. He was scheduled, in fact, to serve on the same nights as the headmaster and another senior master. Thus, he joined with others who Robert Mackay describes felt it a 'tedious and usually uneventful activity.'[544] After two months of service[545] he had only been impressed of how rude was his boss (who Preston felt made no attempts to be sociable during their watches), and also that the effort was wasteful and an example of one more bureaucratic misstep. His time in fire-watching also had the effect of further convincing him of the rightness of his own choices as where to best place his efforts. He wrote in this regard: 'is ridiculous that we should be paid at all for Fire-watching. It is not half the job Talbot House is.'[546]

In sum, the duty amounted to being perceived as another inconvenience of wartime life. Indeed, much more feeling and consideration was aroused by what began with a letter in the post directing him to report to HG. He wrote he felt as though a 'blow' had been struck.[547]

6.3 *Home Guard*

Home Guard was organised in May 1940, when then War Minister, Anthony Eden, had called for men between 17 and 65 who had no other military commitments to become Local Defence Volunteers. 'There followed', describes Summerfield, speaking to how its presentation to the public was intended to attract volunteers: 'a rush of official representations of the Home Guard as nothing short of a metaphor for Britain in wartime.' The presentation of the HG was very effective according to Summerfield, in the early months of its formation: '1.5 million men were said to have came forward, suggesting that the formation of the force resonated strongly with prevailing values and attitudes.'[548]

In the West Riding, Dewhirst writes: ‘men enrolled with enthusiasm, more than 35,000 men joining...during the first ten days.’[549]

6.4 *Historians’ Discussion Surrounding Home Guard*

According to Summerfield and Peniston-Bird, the purpose of official rhetoric surrounding HG at the time: ‘was to construct the Home Guard as inclusive and democratic, a symbol of national unity.’[550] In so doing, it: ‘threw a veil over political and social divisions.’ Thus whilst popular cultural products could be: ‘unsparing in their exposure of the contradictions of national unity in the Home Guard context,’ cultural representation *also* depicted HG as: ‘a central part in the concept of the ‘People’s War’, that is “the idea of ordinary people pulling together to defeat a common foe”.’[551] Helen Jones has recently looked more specifically at civilian defence as an apparatus to define local identity and the desire to serve one’s locality specifically, and in so doing increase identification with the local and strengthening communal ties.[552]

Additionally, the value of HG to the individual has also been raised in historical enquiry. Summerfield and Peniston-Bird examine the contention felt by some former members of HG over the satirical view with which the organisation has been depicted in the popular television show *Dad’s Army*. Summerfield and Peniston-Bird write that: ‘men who have challenged the accuracy of the show have stressed that *Dad’s Army* ignored key aspects of the HG, notably its development as a serious endeavour which had an important place in the formation of young soldiers.’[553] In this vein, Arthur Marwick added that: ‘In the British social history the real importance of the Home Guard was the sense that it gave to many citizens...of complete involvement in all aspects of the war effort.’[554] Noakes also asserts civilian defence as a form of service many found valuable to their sense of being involved in worthwhile effort on the home front.[555]

Furthermore, historians have located pressure upon men to join civilian defence services in gendered representations of citizenship in the public culture which valorised masculine service in uniformed services.[556] Whereas the inter-war period saw a tempering of masculinity as a reaction against the seeming brutality of the First World War, the escalation towards war in the late 1930s

placed focus back on a masculinity wherein men were defenders of the home and nation.[557] Rose asserts militarised service was projected as necessary to one's personhood as a good citizen: 'Being visibly a member of the fighting services was necessary to the performance of wartime masculinity'.[558] Summerfield and Peniston-Bird illustrate the connection between civilian defence and masculine British identity by pointing to the comments of Sir Edward Grigg, Under-Secretary for War, in a speech given seven months after the organisation's formation: 'with rhetorical flourish that was impressive even by the standards of the time', Summerfield and Peniston-Bird state that Grigg, 'enunciated a clearly defined and historically rooted notion of British national identity [in Home Guard].'[559]

Yet neither representations nor rhetoric asserting the necessity of militaristic masculinity in wartime service had, as we saw in the last chapter, compelled Preston to take part in more 'masculine' forms of service. By late 1942 he remained unconvinced of the necessity of civilian defence service. Rather, he was thoroughly assured of the implausibility of an invasion since German forces were tied down on the Russian front. Nor could the local authority have been able to exercise the power to compel Preston, but for the authority given to it to do so as a result of Prime Minister Churchill's insistence of the importance of HG to the morale of men on the home front. Political leadership, especially Churchill, highly placed military service within their speeches, thus affecting the overall conception of military masculinity in society.[560] It is not hypothetical to assert, therefore, that the continued valorisation of military service, and therein of HG, throughout the war must be seen to an extent as having been a result of the personal preferences of Britain's wartime leader in particular, who had a personal interest and excitement for military service,[561] and Britain's wartime leadership more generally, many of whom had strong familial connections to military service.

6.5 *Summons and Tribunal*

The value of militarized forms of service on the home front was something Preston came to feel acutely during his in-processing into HG. Prior to this, he had plenty of opportunity to select HG as a means to contribute towards the effort on the home front. He had viewed the Keighley HG training around town,

but was apparently neither enticed to join, nor opposed that others should give their service in such a way. He expressed a certain amount of respect for the organisation, commenting at one point early in the war: 'This home defence force is not the joke that a similar body was in the last war'.[562] Months later, contemplating others' service in HG, he considered: 'I wonder how many men do this job from a sense of duty and how many really enjoy it.'[563] However, Preston had already felt like he was heavily involved in the war effort and in capacities which he felt were of considerable value. Furthermore, he felt that he was involved in the war effort as much as his daily schedule would allow. At times he felt he had almost too much to do, writing at one point: 'Life is a graceless rush now-a-days.'[564] His self-chosen efforts also saw him serve in a variety of capacities which brought him into contact with many aspects of the war effort, such as helping gather supplies for newly arrived evacuees, and providing meals and entertainment for soldiers. In addition, much smaller aspects of day-to-day living had also been reworked as a result of the war. Thus he did not see HG, or any other form of civil defence, as necessary to giving valuable service, despite the central place given to overtly masculine service in popular and official discourse on the home front.

When he received the summons to report to HG, Preston attempted to remain calm, adopting a resigned dismissiveness towards it: 'This morning I received my notice about having to join the Home Guard. I suppose the next step is to report the matter to [the headmaster].' Yet he struggled to keep a sharp feeling of discontent at bay, writing in the same entry: 'I suppose I ought to feel that I have been fortunate so far, and yet I have been doing something for many many years.'[565] He tried to allay his upset with a belief in the necessity of the effort. If he could find worth in HG, as he had found worth in his other efforts, he could have conviction in the worthwhile quality of HG and find a true desire to dedicate himself to it, thus he posited: 'If a second front is opened it will mean, I suppose that nearly all the regulars will be wanted elsewhere and so then the Home Guard will become the first line of defence.'[566] It was in this context he also affirmed: 'I love my country enough to fight for her, even if such sentiment does sound rather old fashioned.'[567]

Nevertheless, a perception of the lack of necessity of HG soon re-emerged and together with a conviction in his own self-chosen efforts he officially petitioned his HG call-up. In the course of doing so, he found attitudes towards efforts on the home front were startling in favour of civilian defence over other forms of service, and that other forms of service were in fact held with little esteem in the views of many. This began to be evidenced to him in the early stages of the petition, and came from startling directions: '[headmaster] reports this morning that...the Education Officer in Wakefield cannot see his way to doing anything about my Home Guard call-up. He points out that school masters have shorter hours than any other class of worker at the present time'. Such a view was deeply disturbing to Preston and caused him to exclaim: 'may heaven forgive him! If anyone is working harder than I am doing I would like to meet him.'[568]

At his tribunal before the local Ministry of Labour board to argue his case against participation in HG, Preston presented his request as a matter of time constraints. He was careful not to disparage the organisation itself and careful not to present it as a matter of personal preference or as an ethical matter, which was likely an attempt to avoid being seen as shirking or fall under suspicion of being a closeted contentious objector.[569] Moreover, this can be read as an attempt to not seem un-masculine or weak in the climate of wartime wherein masculinity and uniformed service were strongly associated. Despite the consideration he gave in presenting his case, he felt strongly belittled for making a case at all, and his petition was denied. Of the experience before the tribunal he wrote:

> I have had my interview with the Ministry of Labour Board and they have turned down my application flat. Harry Wall had a real good time. He told my claim was preposterous and ridiculous—that I worked only 5 ½ hours a day and not at all at the week-end, that there was too much silly fuss being made about education. It should be all swept away as it had been in Germany. On my objecting that he surely did not want us to follow Germany his reply was that it was only by following Germany that we should win the war. All this business of keeping big lads on at school until they were 17 and 18 was ridiculous. All my corrections could be done in class, according to Wall.[570]

It took several days to process the implications of what was communicated to him at the tribunal. He wrote the following day:

> Did not sleep well at all. Think that my interview before the tribunal upset me. It was the injustice of the whole business that rankles so much. I have been doing all I could since 1937 and now I am selected out of all the hundreds of men of my age to go in the Home Guard....and they are not being interfered with. There was ample time to do all that I now did at home. Scholarship work, done after school, would have to go. School work could suffer. It was profoundly discouraging to discover that after all the work I do nobody believed that I did it. What is the good of troubling to do one's duty. I shall maintain to the end that if I am pushed into the Home Guard that I have been treated most unfairly and unjustly.[571]

As Preston's above comments illustrate, the value of his efforts was strongly repudiated to him. Indeed he felt it was hardly recognised he had even been making an effort. He found this difficult to negotiate and still days after the tribunal he wrote: 'Since my interview with Harry Wall I'm getting a little bit callous. What is the use of being so conscientious when the outside world doesn't believe you. I've come to the conclusion that he best thing to do is to make as much leisure for oneself as one can. I don't really believe this but I feel as though I ought.'[572] That his efforts were so much denied was an impression which stayed with him. Even after he found some acceptance of his call up, the repudiation and belittling he experienced at the tribunal continued to upset him: 'I should have no regrets at all about this matter were it not that it is manifestly unfair. It is no use repining but I do hate to have my honesty taken for low cunning.'[573]

It is an important consideration in regard to Preston's disinclination towards HG that his sentiment was not a result a lack of consideration of his own masculine identity. Preston clearly took his own masculinity into consideration and was influenced in his conduct by his understanding of masculine behaviour as will be discussed later. Nor was he ignorant of the valorised place military service held in society, he followed the news closely and noted the vaulted place he recognised soldiers possessed in society, writing at point:

> More details of entry into Tiris and Bizerta. Must be a great experience to get through an historic battle unscathed and then to enter into a city in triumph to receive a rapturous welcome from the inhabitants. Probably some of our men will have experienced an uplifting of spirit on the present occasion, so that all the remainder of life will seem anti-climax after it. When Tirus is mentioned, perhaps then will they bare their arms and say, "This scar etc.". '[574]

6.6 *Home Guard's Interaction with Preston's Selfhood*

Despite his understanding that military service occupied a valorised role in much of society's estimation and himself holding considerable appreciation for the sacrifices of military service,[575] in being forced to enlist in HG at the expense of his own self chosen efforts Preston felt nothing less than being manhandled by the state. He was however resolved to keep his composure, and if possible to not look like a fool. Thus, his efforts, which were very dedicated, in HG training were as much in defiance of those forces which had put him there as for the purpose of HG itself. He threw himself into the effort, concerned especially that his age should not be seen by the younger men who made up his entire division and he be labelled the 'old man' in the group. He wrote of feeling exhausted after the 'physical jerks' put through during training.[576] The written notes he took also indicate that he thoroughly studied the material with which he was presented.[577] His ability is further evidenced in that he was asked on several occasions to accept promotions. He did eventually accept a promotion to the intelligence corps because he thought it would relieve him of some of the less preferred duties of HG, including the parades. He also paid considerable attention to his uniform so as to appear in good form. At one point he looked up in an encyclopaedia how to position his bayonet, and another time he stopped his cycle to adjust his uniform upon seeing another guardsman cycle past whom Preston noticed had arranged his uniform more correctly.

Whilst HG service was not a form of service which he had chosen, he still saw the effort he gave in HG as counting towards the degree of effort he was giving on the home front, so that by early February 1943 he stated unreservedly: 'Munitions workers toil no harder than I do, of that I'm convinced.'[578] He also came to find some reassurance that the effort was worthwhile by placing his efforts in the historic context wherein members of the nation defended the country from invaders, writing that if an invasion attempt was ever made: 'I shall do my endeavour as our ancestors had it.'[579]

However, despite Preston's attempt to try to wed his efforts to real purpose in HG by setting his service in line with the notion of the citizen-soldier who had historically been called upon to defend the nation, a strong note of scepticism

remained prevalent towards his involvement in HG, and towards the usefulness of the organisation more generally. Although he was determined to prove himself able in the capacities HG required, Preston never did come to take himself seriously in the role of guardsmen. The lack of seriousness with which he perceived his role in HG six months after he began is clear: 'I shall be a complete soldier in a while. I only need a tin hat and then let the Nazis come.'[580]

Though Preston's comments show he took some pleasure at being able to keep up with and in some cases surpass the younger men in his division, his role in HG never integrated into his identity, it was rather as though he were playing a part in a play. His training in stage-craft had cultivated in him a tendency to observe, to see what was before him as theatre. However, his inability to take HG seriously remained a foremost result of his perception of the effort as one without any legitimate need. By the time of his service German forces were heavily involved in Eastern Europe and Russia, and the Second Battle of El Alamein in late 1942 convincingly turned the tide in North Africa in the Allies' favour. Furthermore, as his experience continued, Preston increasingly saw HG as a site of a combination of farce and what he felt to be the truly grotesque aspects military training inculcated in humans. Whereas his involvement in Toc H and educating the youth had seen him try to nourish the inner self and encourage thoughtfulness, he saw his training in HG as encouraging him to see his fellow beings with detachment and cruelty. His perception of the grotesqueness of military training was expressed for instance in the following:

> Did some arms' drill then were taken out through the wet to the Ritz Car Park for bayonet drill. "You aim for the throat, belly or groin. When you have bayoneted him you smash his b---y face in, then when he is down you bayonet the b---r again and put your foot in his b---y face to withdraw the bayonet. He's only a b--y German so it doesn't matter!" and thus we spend Sunday morning in the year of grace 1943. Returned to Drill Hall where we were lectured on how to sling gas-masks—a most helpful talk with demonstrations.[581]

He wrote later still: 'We get more and more civilized. To-night we have been learning how to do the monkey-crawl, the kitten crawl and the Cossack crawl and how to knife a sentry from behind so that he has no chance to cry out. This is 1943. No further comment is necessary.'[582] He found the training at

Christmas time particularly ripe for send up: ‘We spent an hour bayonet fighting—just to prepare us for “Peace on earth goodwill to men.” ’[583]

He pointed often to the potential harm done to the individual in learning such things as were taught in HG. Indication of this sentiment was given in the following way: ‘Evidently our rulers do not anticipate bloody revolution or they would hardly be training all and sundry in the use of arms, but there is danger in training a nation in the use of arms’.[584]

A number of comments anticipate the kind of portrayal HG would later receive in such cultural products as the television series *Dad’s Army*, and to some extent reflect some of the less-reverent portrayals of the HG at the time.[585] At being made to do a ‘kitten crawl punishment’ he wrote: ‘I hope we shall all live to laugh over this in peace-time.’[586] It seems he came to disagree with his own comment earlier in the war that the home defence organisation was not going to be the joke it was in the First World War. Even after training for over a year together he did not feel the overall capability of the unit was much to regard: ‘I have come to the conclusion that if ever Nazis are killed through Home Guard agency it will be because we shall cause them to die with laughing.’[587]

The awfulness of what war and military training reduced human beings to was also increasingly bourn upon him. After receiving training for the event of a gas attack, he wrote:

> There is also, it appears, talk once more of the possibility of using prussic acid gas. This we were cheerfully told, will make us so dizzy that we shall be unable to put gas masks on at all. Thus I have spent my Sunday morning close up against man’s inhumanity to man. If some being from another planet could have peeped into that gas-chamber and watched the grotesque figures we were...he would have concluded that we were sinister beings bent on some horrible mischief....I don’t think I have ever been quite so struck by the ugliness of it all, so much as I was this morning.[588]

He also increasingly felt that war was not just horrible, but that it truly was against human nature. This was impressed upon him in many instances, but he was especially struck by an event whilst on patrol:

> Went up to upper Shann Farm and reconnoitred the position and then returned to the Drill Hall. When we were making our way back down from

> Lower Shann Farm we found a little tit lying on its back on the cinder path. Corporal Kane picked it up and found it still alive. The patrol clustered round to see what to do with it. After discussion it was with infinite care put in the field at the side of the path. I could not help being struck by the incongruity of ten soldiers all armed with instruments calculated to kill a man at a mile distance, and engaged upon training in such killing all being concerned at some accident that had happened to a tiny bird. It shows how violently we are being wrenched from our natures in these terrible days.[589]

By November 1943 Preston had become unreserved in his opinion about the whole affair: 'Home Guard training...really is a farce now.'[590] He increasingly noted the waste of time he felt HG was.[591] His frustration at the waste of time he felt HG to be was compounded by the apparent prevalence for drunkenness amongst HG leaders. Initially Preston seemed somewhat surprised by this,[592] however, after numerous instances with varying levels of shock associated, he came to accept it almost as a matter of course: 'Quarter-master (drunk slightly) and his assistant (very) came in to give us their blessing.'[593] His attitude towards what he perceived to be military blustering also became pronounced and was reflected in his nightly 'campaigns' against the slugs attacking his household vegetable garden, wherein he sent up the militarism he saw on display at HG. At one point he imagined the slugs announcing the losses of comrades due to his raids.[594]

He scoffed at the notion that HG training was something of which to be especially proud. He wished to not have to attend parades and he got out of participating in them when possible. He noted at one point the 'agitation afoot' for gaining proficiency badges with detachment and slight annoyance.[595] A year later, his sentiment in this regard remained unmoved: 'We simply sat on the floor and gossiped. We were issued with service chevrons—another bit of foolishness.'[596]

It is an important point also that much of his sense of accomplishment at doing well in physical training against men much younger than himself[597] was in the context of his personal concerns parallel to the war over aging and his fear of declining mental and physical powers. He noted on several occasions that he was increasingly feeling as though he was not a young man anymore and he was irritated to perceive the difference in the way in which young people treated him. He was alarmed also to discover the loss of hair on the back of his head.

The effects of aging were also brought into focus at the time by the intimate view Preston had of his mother-in-law's declining mental powers consequent of her advancing age. Upon commenting on incidences wherein he encountered this, he often noted that he wished not live such a long life that he would experience similar decline.

The saving grace of his involvement in HG rested in his perception of the fullness of the effort he gave. Yet, although he did find some satisfaction in accomplishing, and accomplishing well, the tasks set before him in HG, he did not take genuine enjoyment in the effort. The satisfaction he expressed at doing a job well in HG never matched the joy he wrote of at seeing a theatre production at the school go well, or of the gladness he felt at hearing of the works Toc H was doing around the world.[598] Moreover, Preston never gained an appreciation for the skills he learned whilst in HG. Throughout, his personal preferences showed through and his resolve to not become absorbed was evidenced in small ways, such as when he described the weapons training he received by incorporating parts of Henry Reed's poem 'Naming of Parts'.[599]

As HG duties began to ease in 1944 he expressed his relief: 'It has been grand not to have to put a uniform on to-day but to be able to spend a day like a civilized being and not to have to 'march two and two' and by Captain's commands.'[600] Upon declarations of victory in 1945, he did not indicate that he felt any the better for being part of HG. He happily discarded his uniform pieces: 'ridded myself of tin hat, haversack, camouflage net, anti-gas ointment, eye-shields, belt, bayonet and webbing. I hope I never see them again.'[601] He was glad only to keep the great coat and boots—the former being helpful against the cold and the latter being 'splendid for heavy work.'[602] He indicated that amongst the service given on home front, he did not think HG especially merited distinction, writing:

> The King is going to broadcast on December 3rd, the day of the Stand-Down Parades for the Home Guard. There is a tremendous lot of fuss made about the Home Guard and comparatively little about the Civil Defence Services who have probably put nearly as much time in and who in many places have been in action, something the Home Guard has never been, with the exception of A.A. Gunners.[603]

Not only did Preston not feel his efforts in HG were worthy of distinction in relation to the national war effort, he neither felt that his experience positively interacted with his sense of masculine identity. He noted only that he saw it to some extent as representative of the passing of his youth, that never again would he be considered a candidate for such an endeavour as HG.[604]

6.7 *Preston's Wartime Negotiation of Masculinity*

As mentioned previously, Preston's disinclination towards HG was not because he did not take seriously his masculine identity. He was clearly aware of and considerate towards his masculinity and also took notice of the valorised place of military service in society. Yet throughout his HG service he remained disinclined to adopt a more militarised form of masculine identity. That he remained unmoved by popular evocations was a result of his location of what he held to be more ideal forms of masculinity in areas outside of militaristic forms of masculinity. A key element of his conception of masculinity seems to have rested in the need to see real purpose and to exercise restraint in overt displays of masculinity.

It is discernible that he took satisfaction in his own sense of his ability and self-reliance and that this was a significant factor in the construction of his own masculine identity. A sense of ability was evidenced in the service he rendered to his aging parents, who lived in the nearby community of Oakworth. He wrote on one occasion: 'Went up to Oakworth in afternoon and worked on a cinder path up by the cherry, tree, apple tree and currant bushes, then mowed both lawns. Quite enjoyed myself. Don't make such a bad labourer. Have the quality of keeping on.'[605]

He also located his own sense of ability and self-reliance in a way that can be seen to have combined the local value placed on inventiveness which had been long cultivated alongside industry in Keighley and his own ability for focused analysis. This manifested in a variety of projects he took up during the war in the way of gardening, fixing and mending items, in the maintence of Talbot House, as well as his own house, and in the 'toy-manufacture' at Toc H for Christmas time. He expressed especial delight at setting right a grandfather clock in his home after carefully examining the mechanisms.[606]

He also saw it as a point of deep satisfaction to be able to make his own means of transportation and to be able to cover quite considerable terrain and distances on his bicycle. Whilst a night time cycle accident caused him to be more wary of cycling in the blackout, his confidence otherwise as a cyclist increased tremendously during the war. As writer and cycling campaigner Ben Irvine describes: 'Through learning how (and when) to mend a puncture, replace or tighten brake pads, clean a chain or change a wheel, cyclists can gain proficiency in working with material things'.[607] Preston's confidence was such that he came to take his summer holiday via his cycle, in addition to making cycling his daily means of transportation. On one holiday to Stratford-upon-Avon he made the roundtrip journey entirely by cycle power. That he came to feel glad at his own sense of self-reliance over his transport was frequently articulated. He wrote at one point: 'I only wish that I could leave on record all that cycling has meant to me. I look back with real satisfaction on my many tours.'[608] His confidence of his own physical strength and virility was also assured to him by his doctor's assertion at a check-up in 1944 that he would: 'pass for a man of twenty-eight.'[609]

Towards the war effort, he attended to civil defence needs when it seemed warranted, as when just days before his HG summons he had volunteered to become a searcher on a night when a warning for a possible blitz was sent out.[610] Thus, it appears that when masculine services were legitimately required as he perceived it, he did take part, but he did not seek out overtly masculine service simply for the sake of engaging in masculine forms of service.

Furthermore, Preston's encounters with servicemen did not cause him to perceive militaristic forms of masculinity as necessarily encompassing the traits for which men should strive. For instance, in his contact with the troops training near the town, he noted that many displayed woefully inadequate discipline, writing: 'There is more than one sort of discipline. There is such a thing as self discipline but training is necessary for that too.'[611] He also deplored what he described as the 'filthy' talk that was prevalent amongst many soldiers with whom he came into contact and also looked down on the apparent interest soldiers had to find low forms of entertainment through perusing pubs, dance halls, and betting, as well as engaging in ego-driven conversation.[612] Thus,

whilst he acknowledged some considerably admirable traits amongst servicemen and expressed real appreciation for their service throughout the conflict, the prevalence of some behaviours amongst soldiers and airmen also seemed to confirm in his mind the strengths of the gentleman were as much to be striven for as those which could be imparted through military training.[613]

Moreover, in Preston's eyes, the mere association with the military did not earn one respect; the use of one's position in the military to aggrandise oneself was seen as especially poor form. He saw the air of importance that some former colleagues and students assumed as a result of their military service as distasteful. Of one Old Boy he wrote: 'getting a uniform seems to have inflated manhood so as to set him above the crowd.'[614]

He was, moreover, generally averse to feelings of deference and, therefore, did not perceive that respect was inherent towards military leadership. Though there were several individuals mentioned in admiration, such as Commonwealth Field Marshal Jan Smuts,[615] he was reticent to praise most military leaders, whom he saw as war-loving and self-absorbed. When the G.O.C. Northern Command visited the school he was very sardonic about the 'pleasure' of being in company of such 'greatness'.[616]

Nor did Preston see military service itself in a wholly positive light; it was not a great and noble adventure as he saw it, but an experience to make one miserable—being bossed about, living in stark conditions both physically and mentally, and being trained in the cultivation of instincts towards the destruction of one's fellow human beings. Preston felt military training and service could very possibly be harmful to the inner-self of the individual,[617] and was not at all useful in civilian life. He wrote earlier in the war, in the context of his contact with soldiers at Talbot House, that military service seemed to him: 'almost like being deprived of precious years of life....To thinking men this waste of precious time must be most galling.'[618]

He saw the effects of war on civilian society also as the antithesis of progress,[619] stating at one point for instance that the way people were forced to shelter in tunnels made 'modern troglodytes' of humankind.[620] The bending of one's mental efforts to the considerations of war was degrading. Following one

HG meeting he remarked: 'what a way for civilized men to be spending their time! Plotting to kill other so-called civilized men.'[621]

His views on the sacredness of individuality and disconcertment over the extension of state power impacted the regard he held for military service at a theoretical level also. At seeing a military parade through town he wrote: 'There never was such an age of uniforms in the history of our country and I suppose it is symbolic of the way all individuality is being ironed out of us and we are being made uniform so that we all think alike and respond automatically to order from supposed superiors from above.'[622]

Preston saw masculinity to a tremendous degree in line with the code of conduct of a gentleman. In the course of his own life he had surely grown accustomed to the tension between practical and intellectual abilities—he had been, after all, a youth with strong interests in literature and theatre who had grown up in a heavily industrial town which praised practical ingenuity and craftsmanship. He wrote of being told as a young man that the: 'ability to drive a nail straight [was] of far more use than knowledge of English lit. or French.'[623] He was also surely aware of the criticisms which had been levelled at Oxford students due to their association with peace movements, and the declaration of some of their unwillingness to fight in the event of another war.[624]

Despite criticisms of Ivory Tower intellectuals, Preston continued to appreciate the views of writers, poets, philosophers, and other thinkers. An article in *John O' London's* describing the value of diary writing according to literary figures likely, at least partially, accounted for the beginning of his own *Diary*.[625] His attention to literary men is evidenced in other ways as well. For instance, Preston's own interest in cycling saw him take note whilst reading John Gibson Lockhart's biography of Sir Walter Scott in August 1944 of Scott's 'amazing' stamina to be able to cycle 30 miles in a day and answer all of his letters on the same day as he received them. Preston remarked as a result: 'What work he got through really is staggering. I shall have to pull myself together.'[626] Therefore, being a man inclined to literature and the arts did not have to translate into effeteness as Preston saw it, but guided him in a version of manhood which he admired.

Indeed, Preston's negotiation of masculinity also rested to an extent in feeling assured of the rightness of his sensibilities in regard to tastes and social mores. He saw mass entertainments (films, radio sit-coms and thrillers, comics) as mind numbing, and the growing taste within society for such forms as entertainment as an indication of people's increasing detachment from more mentally and spiritually stimulating sources.[627] He also saw public behaviour as generally lowering, writing for instance on several occasions of the ill conduct of members of the audience in theatre performances he saw in town, the increase in extra-marital sex and affairs, and the growing selfishness and materialism manifest in people's outlook on life. Such judgement is telling of Preston's own self-perception; as Oshana tell us: 'Sensitivity to considerations for the management of conduct that others, similarly motivated, acknowledge as justified reflects recognition on the part of the actor that his behaviour rightly can be evaluated by others.'[628] In feeling that he was in a position to assess the behaviour of those around him, Preston affirmed his regard for his own judgement and conduct.

Thus, his masculinity was founded in part in rejecting the ideals put forth regarding militaristic or overt displays of masculinity, and his demarcation from those he perceived as less thoughtful than himself. This translated into a more marginal version of proper masculinity, but one which still sustained him as a result of his continued self-evaluation, his regard for his own self-reliance, and through looking to reference points which he felt were appropriate standards for the right kind of masculinity.

The right kind of masculinity also saw him take his position as a householder, husband, and father seriously in consideration of his own masculine identity. As a youth the Preston family's financial circumstances had always been precarious. Therefore, his ability to obtain a mortgage towards a spacious semi-detached house in a middle-class neighbourhood on the outskirts of Keighley was a mark of considerable accomplishment for him. He wrote of his efforts to manage his finances during his early years as a school master in order that he would be able to provide for he and his then fiancé to some day have a comfortable life together. It is notable in this regard that he made a special point to write when his parents' obtained the deeds to their property.[629] He was also concerned to provide his own son with the privileges of education and travel.

In addition to his position as a householder, his position within the home also bears importance to Preston's masculine identity. Whilst the relationship between Preston and his wife will be more fully discussed in the following chapter, in regard to his masculinity during the war his relationship with his wife bears relevance here in two ways. Firstly, he shared with her a secure, stable, and companionable relationship. For the most part he shared his world with her—he confided in her, and she with him—and in this way they comprised their own private space. This offered Preston not only a secure sense of masculinity, but of personhood. With her he was able to be in a place both temporally and metaphorically where he was himself and that was accepted, even appreciated.

His spousal relationship, however, also served as a secure source of masculinity through the patriarchy he exercised within the household. 'Patriarchy', writes Tosh, 'can still usefully be used to denote sexual hierarchy in the household'.[630] Aho also tells us: 'Private spheres of power are crucial to modern ego-sense'.[631] Summerfield's discussion of women during the war also usefully discusses the way the male gender has historically been constructed in relation to female subjugation, making control a prevalent aspect of masculinity.[632] We can see Preston's position as head of the household was an undoubted aspect of his masculine identity. Threats to his role were strongly felt, as in the case of his mother's perceived 'interference' in supplying his son a new pair of shoes. His disagreement with such a measure was unhesitating, he immediately described the measure as 'intolerable'.[633] Preston was the sole wage-earner; he managed the household's finances and gave an allowance to his wife, which was then sacrosanct but upon which she was dependent upon him to give her, she apparently did not have access to the financial accounts wherein the money was kept. Equally, he served as a provider of insight, he lived in the 'real world' whilst she remained sheltered, which had the effect of placing her in a position wherein she looked to him with questions regarding the 'ways of the world'. In his diary writings he painted her as having a much more pleasant attitude to the world and not feeling his sense of discontent and in this there was steadiness and goodness in her as Preston saw it, which is perhaps what he wanted to see in her. Yet indications also testify that it would have been unacceptable for her to show a less than virtuous nature; as it existed it was praised, but expected. Thus, 'keeping his family'—protecting and providing for

them in all ways—was a positive source of his masculine identity, and overall self-validity.

Central to the way his role as head of the household informed his sense of masculinity was not just that he was in a position of control, but that he exercised that control benevolently. He did not see himself as 'bossing' his wife about, and noted other husbands' behaviour of which he disapproved in ways that can be read as implied contrast with himself of the backward nature of some husbands' treatment towards their wives. For example, in regard to one family, he reported hearing that: '[the wife] and the girl have been cowed. When the [husband/father] is home they are running round after him and fetching and carrying for him all the time.'[634] What shaped his views towards being a husband are difficult to know. He discussed his thinking around domestic aspects of life very little in the diary. Yet the mild natured approach is in line with the trope of gentility and civility which Preston espoused in his conduct more generally. Noteworthy as well is that a more liberal, family-oriented masculinity was increasingly seen as acceptable and praiseworthy by masculine standards of mid-twentieth century, as has been discussed in several recent works, including that by Laura King, wherein she identifies the emergence of a more visible 'family-oriented masculinity'.[635]

Preston's masculine conduct can also be seen to have been in line with what Mosse described within the conception of a properly ordered and settled society, wherein: 'as a rule family life and true masculinity were reconciled'. Mosse goes on to explain: 'This reconciliation depended upon the status of women. As long as women were subordinate to men, and the differences between the sexes clearly marked in every respect, man enjoyed a certain amount of freedom, even if it was paired with responsibility.'[636] Preston thus saw delineation between the sexes wherein, as Charles Lemert describes: 'the traditional sex roles theories that assigned to women the role of moral leader of the household and, among the bourgeois and white classes, keepers of the personal domestic needs of the husband.'[637]

As Summerfield and Mosse indicate, this was not a conception that existed within the household alone, but rather saw the subordination of women extended to society as well, and such it was in Preston's conception of the

relationship between women and men outside of the home. Although it seems he felt little inclination to live up to the militaristic forms of masculinity idealized during the war, he did feel women in society should subscribe to and firmly uphold idealized femininity during war despite the fact that normative pressures which caused adoption of narrowly 'masculine' or 'feminine' identities were disrupted by the war.[638] Changes to feminine conduct during the war have been located in the necessity of many women transitioning from working solely in the home to also working outside of the home, and the increased spending power women gained from war work, as well as for some the freedom from constraints normally imposed by family and close-knit communities they gained as a result of relocating consequent of their war work. Importantly too, Paul Jennings tell us, changes in women's behaviour during the war 'reflected too…women's belief in the right to leisure as equal contributors to the general war effort.'[639]

Summerfield's work locates specific groups of women which were at the time identified in social discourse as potentially disruptive, these were: idle rich women, immoral lower class women, and bossy authoritarian women.[640] Preston's expressed disapproval is consistent with Summerfield's conclusions of wartime views of women, however he seemed to take particular issue with young, supposedly immoral women. Based on readings of his own fictional writings and his comments in the diary, Preston's views on femininity suggest that he held that women, especially young women, should perform submissive and appropriate demeanour.[641] He wrote in the *Diary* that it was in the difference between men and women that sexual attraction existed and there are sexual undertones to a short story he wrote in the 1930s which was never published. This was of an encounter between a school-master and a young woman at a bus stop.[642] Therein the male character is clearly attracted to the female character whose submissive demeanor—looking down when she talks and not saying too much about herself—is meant to indicate her gentleness and femininity and, subsequently, her desirability.

His conceptions of women can also perhaps be located in the culture of post-war England, where the rise in female emancipation has been found to have put fear into and unsettled masculinity. Virginia Nicholson has described that amongst men of the era: 'a lot of anger…of defensiveness…of paranoia' was

felt as a result of believing 'that young, free, single, liberated, possibly sexually liberated women [were] going to rise up and take over the world.'[643]

Although traditional Victorian values were breaking down before the war broke out, Preston saw a clear change in demeanour amongst some women consequent of the war and was strongly critical of these changes. After one night at Talbot House he reported: 'Are number of A.T.S. girls using the house. Impudent huzzies some of them—I suppose that is mark of age.'[644] He also had strong criticisms of the increase in women performing what he felt to be masculine activities in public places. That women should smoke and drink in public were causes of constant frustration: for one thing, it diminished the difference he felt to be so critical to attraction between women and men. He wrote that women were becoming masculine through engaging in such behaviour.[645] He often associated negative connotation to women's behaviour when women engaged in such activites, reporting for instance that women who were smoking publicly were: 'marching about in the streets smoking.'[646] That he saw it beyond the bounds of normative behaviour is evident in the following passage: 'The practice of smoking in the street and in public places that women indulge in now is increasing by leaps and bounds.'[647] Describing women's participation in smoking (and drinking for that matter) as an indulgence is indicative of his perception that women were somehow taking advantage of the wartime situation.

He also regularly commented on the dangerous sexual prowess of women during war, placing blame for the rise in extramarital sex squarely at women's feet. His sentiment was in line with Tosh's discussion of the Victorian code of respectable feminine conduct: 'the passionless woman was by now firmly established in respectable middle-class culture', wherein: 'sexual appetite was rather read as evidence of...corruption.'[648] Preston wrote for instance after hearing of an affair: 'Just shows how some women are starved for what they long for….When there is a chance, even an undesirable one, they are unable to resist it. There will be many more doomed to spinsterhood as a result of the present goings on.'[649] He took no objection to, and concurred in his disgust of, tales told to him by soldiers at Talbot House of what was referred to on several occasions as 'the gross shamelessness of Keighley women where soldiers are concerned.' He seemed to find no objection to a soldier's claim that: 'if Keighley

was distinguished for its hospitality it was most notorious for its girls…Six divorces and numerous separations had resulted from this sojourn in Keighley. Certain public houses…the RoeBuck at Utley, here is a hot-bed of iniquity.'[650] Perhaps because of his sureness in his opinion towards the female tendency towards iniquituous behaviour, he did not protest upon hearing that one of his Toc H colleagues had allowed a girl to be sexually harassed by a soldier upon hearing the girl's cries for help because he thought: 'it would be the best way to teach the young hussy a lesson if she were thoroughly frightened.'[651] This is again illustrative of how Preston's patriarchal conception of the sexes influenced how a situation was understood.

This patriarchal perception of events evident in his views also saw him cast his criticisms as mere concerns for the pitiable girls that were engaging in something that was not in their best interest. He wrote clearly of this for instance in the following: 'I don't think some of the girls who are being called up and who are suddenly finding themselves with unlimited freedom are going to come to good. There was a remarkable freedom apparent, I thought, in some of their association with men.'[652]

However, Preston's criticisms of the female were not limited to the wartime context, but rather extended more generally. He regularly placed women as inferior and through this condescension of women he acknowledged himself as being in a position of greater knowing and superiority generally. He did not conceive that most differences between men and women were not attributed to internalized personality traits but rather explained by: 'differential experiences, opportunities, and access to social networks.'[653] He did come close to perceiving this at one point when he examined the behaviour of a woman in the context of the treatment she received from her husband. Specifically, he questioned whether the verbal abuse from the husband was the reason that the wife 'exaggerated' and made 'silly boasts' so to 'brighten her life' which was otherwise 'rather grey' as a result of her husband's treatment. He questioned in this same way whether: 'Her lavish spending too may have been an attempt to find a satisfaction which her own married life did not give her.' He concluded by chalking up his considerations to being merely 'theories'[654] without grasping or applying the notion more generally that female conduct could be strongly conditioned by the circumstances they experienced at home and in society.

Instead, he held, as did much of contemporary society that the traits of females and males were inherently different, and it seems he saw females as inherently flawed. The notion he held of an inherent difference between the sexes was socially reinforced for example in a discussion on Brains' Trust wherein: 'It was thought that women had a different conception of happiness from men, and that they were more concerned than men with personal relationships and found their happiness in a narrower world.'[655] Perhaps most damning, women were held as less able within the literary world. One attack of a female poet in the inter-war period for instance stated that the opinions of the female were 'full of ...woolly and emotional assumptions', hence the book produced by that particular female author was asserted to be aimed only at the 'literary tourist'. Women were not seen to have the 'masculine, scholarly touch'.[656]

Preston similarly held that women were much less capable of intellectual thought. He made note of instances that seemed to reinforce his belief, writing of one dinner with friends: 'The wives have been talking babies and Law and I have been talking philosophy and theology and Church Councils and so on'.[657] He later questioned how the marriage between the aforementioned couple, wherein the man was a parson, would 'work out' since the wife did 'not try to act like a parson's wife', nor 'try to moderate her language.'[658] He also wrote of being 'amazed' to discover that a neighbouring girl of his was 'a great reader of poetry.'[659]

He similarly held that women were less able in the workplace. School masters were notable at the time for holding that women were unequal in their professional capacities. Summerfield writes: 'The explicit misogyny of men's professional organisations such as the National Association of School Masters was matched by more general hostility to women in the workplace, intensified by rising levels of unemployment between the wars. This was the context within which women crossed gender boundaries at work in the Second World War, a period when masculinity was again under pressure and received special attention.'[660] Yorkshire specifically was prominent in its discrimination against women teachers. The Yorkshire Education Committee for instance strongly resisted the Board of Education's motion to suspend the rule barring employment of married women.[661]

Whilst Preston never voiced outright opposition to women in the workplace, there were patriarchal undertones in his conduct with female members of the staff. Upon the arrival of one new female master, for instance, he went and listened to her teach to apparently see if she was any good or not at her vocation.[662] He apparently however did not feel it equally appropriate to so observe a male colleague, since he never reported having gone to listen to any of the new male masters although he noted their arrival at the school. His condescension is clear in reporting of the assistance he provided to one new arrival: 'I spent until 5 pm to-night giving Miss Branton some hints on the IIIrd and IV forms. She confessed to me that she's having trouble in keeping order.'[663]

Few women were, as he saw it, worthy of distinction. He seemed truly surprised to learn one of the female teachers at the school had been published: 'Miss S. has actually contributed to the transaction of the Bronte Society'.[664] He immediately sought out the piece and described it in piddling terms as an: 'interesting little article'. However, there were a few exceptions. He mentally chided a young man for speaking badly of Dorothy Una Ratcliffe. The youth 'would have been surprised' wrote Preston, 'to learn that Dorothy Una Ratcliffe was considered worth representation at Wollman's Anthology along with Eliot and MacNaire and Auden etc.' He also wrote admiringly of the character Mary Thorne in Trollope's Dr Thorne: 'She really is a young woman you can believe in.'[665] He also had high praise for Dorothy Sayer's *The Man Born to be King*.[666]

Much more common however was the equation of women's behaviour and thought processes as silly. Often the same behaviour or sentiment in women as that of men was viewed in negative terms and the woman was subsequently demeaned for her behaviour. For instance, upon hearing two women say at war's end that Japan should have received another bomb 'to bring them to their senses', he wrote: 'Truly the female of the species is more deadly than the male.'[667] This was despite expressing repeated disgust throughout the war at listening to expressions of delight from his male colleagues over Allied bombing raids. He felt so strongly on one occasion to write: 'Makes me sick to hear the gloating that goes on in the staff-room about all this destruction. Some of the men who are doing the gloating are just about as cowardly as it is possible to imagine.'[668] This measure of female conduct was repeated in service

organisations as well. Furthermore, he reported feeling that: ‘there is always trouble where women are concerned’, yet when cooperation between women was exhibited he described it as quaint rather than true signs of thoughtfulness and cooperation.[669] Neither did he see women in the services as worthy of praise or recognition, he wrote, for instance, that one girl’s participation in WLA had certainly ‘not made her a lady’.[670]

6.8 *Home Guard—Site of Social and Local Cohesion?*

In addition to interacting with members’ sense of masculine identity, involvement in HG has been identified as being a positive factor in many people’s sense of togetherness and community on the home front.[671] Exploration of HG as a site of social cohesion has particularly focused on the way the unique environment presented members the opportunity to work together within a small group with a common and a compelling cause to defend the guardsmen’s own town and locality in the event of invasion. The HG was also portrayed and intended to be inclusive, as are many fighting units, and to forge bonds between members. Amelioration of class tensions was to be a direct result of this *esprit de corps*. Cohesion has been recently reasserted by Jones to have been enhanced by the local organisation of HG. According to Jones: ‘a sense of shared identity was one aspect of British cities in wartime that made them communities....we should not be surprised that people felt a strong identity with their town or city at a time of upheaval, for a sense of place may be more intense when perceived to be under threat.’ ‘For civil defence workers, the fire services and Royal Observer Corps’, Jones continues: ‘the specific geographical space in which they functioned was integral to small group identity.’[672]

Preston’s construction of his identity largely independent of dominant social pressures would have immediate consequence for his interaction with his fellow guardsmen in the 27th Battalion of the West Riding HG. Preston’s initial resistance to HG was in part on the grounds that he felt unfairness at being the only member of his social milieu to receive HG summons, making clear there was initially a strong sense of otherness between himself and the other members of his unit. He again noted the difference he perceived between him

and the other men during the first meeting, indicating the difference he felt was of some importance to him.

Despite social pressures to join with fellow civil defenders in a feeling of cohesiveness in defending against an outside enemy, Preston was reticent to simply dismiss his preconceptions and adopt an attitude in line with wartime discourse. In fact, the sense of difference between he and the other men was soon enhanced by the language of the men which was noted by Preston for: 'the prevalence of sex-talk' and 'general filthiness'.[673] The low tone of conversation made for a stark contrast he felt between himself and the other men in HG.

Nevertheless, an assertion by Preston of regional identity and we-ness in the early months of his service is detected in a comparison he made with other regional HG units: 'I expressed the opinion that of course the London Home Guard would be the model for the country for smartness and efficiency but from what I gathered we can up here knock spots off them in London.'[674] This was a conception of the Keighley HG he may have reconsidered after his training led him to lose confidence in his HG battalion as a fighting force. He does not again make any comments indicative of such feelings and at the war's end he wrote of what he perceived to be the inequality in recognition given to HG when it was civilian defence services in London who were the ones to see action.

Rather the feeling of separateness between him and the others seemed to increase in the following weeks. The topics of conversation were a particular contentious point: 'The talk was smut, smut, smut. Why must many men be so filthy and so eager to parade their filth.'[675] Shortly thereafter, he was delighted to hear of a reduction in HG duties, adding: 'I shall not be sorry. The language of these fellows I have to associate with is really very trying....Sex seems to loom large in some men's mind so that every other word they use must contain some reference to it.'[676]

Yet, the following day he felt genuinely warmed by a gesture made to him by his company sergeant major to hail him in the street to say hello and after another five months of training, a significant depth had been added to Preston's

perception of the men with whom he served. He wrote of this in the following way:

> Generally speaking they are a foul-mouthed lot of men in the Keighley Home Guard and yet somehow you cannot help feeling that most of them mean nothing by it, it is just a fashion of talking. In a jam they would probably be more reliable than many nicer mannered men and I believe they would make noble efforts for a mate in distress. Curiously, and I cannot tell why, you feel it is something to win their acceptance and respect without lowering yourself to their level.[677]

6.9 *Conflict Elsewhere Within the Community*

The above comment can be read in direct reference to his increasing resentment towards his 'nicer mannered' work colleagues at KBGS throughout the war. He felt a distinct lack of mutual support amongst his colleagues during the war. In one instance he included his sentiment in this regard within expression of another point of contention he felt with his colleagues—their gloating over Allied bombing raids:

> The pursuit of Rommel still continues. Conversation in the staff-room has been sickening to-day. The way in which some of these mean spirited colleagues of mine have been gloating over the slaughter when they are most tenacious of every one of their own familiar comforts and conveniences and support the Toc H Appeal to the extent of about a shilling apiece...and would run and roar if there was the slightest danger to their own skins.[678]

A lack of trust and of respect became increasingly evident in his relations with co-workers. Referring to one of his colleagues in particular he wrote: 'He is the type who would be the first to collaborate with the Nazis, if they got over here.'[679] As pointed to in the former quote, he also felt throughout the war that his colleagues did not reciprocate support and assistance for each other's charitable activities. Furthermore, he also felt a lack of reciprocity in regard to wartime school duties. The increased duties of school masters during the war saw colleagues often trade particular duties to better fit their schedules. Whilst Preston frequently mentioned adjusting his schedule to assist another, he felt a lack of co-operation from others, writing in this regard: 'I am beginning to be so disgusted by all the selfishness there is that I do no feel like putting myself out for people.'[680]

He also saw selfishness within Keighley's middle-class more generally and he was often galled by the behaviours of those in his social circles during the war.

He was shocked at the spending that continued by his middle-class friends and neighbours, reporting that the selfish conduct of one woman would have caused her to be shot in Germany.[681] The war largely aside, he was also galled at the prevalence for discreet boasting and what he considered bourgeois sensibilities amongst the middle-classes in Keighley. After returning from one dinner party he wrote of one set of parents who gloated over the success of their child to such an extent Preston referred to the son as 'the oracle' in his description of the evening.[682] He also heard the complaints of the more considerably wealthy during the war with a cold ear and was annoyed to hear pining for such mindless activities as motoring and holidays abroad.[683] He also witnessed a great deal of contention when the Keighley branch of Toc H and the Ingrow branch of Toc H merged and a power struggle ensued between the two branches presidents. Preston as agast at the way the two men seemed to put their own egos before the good of the association. Eventually the Keighley president resigned and left Toc H altogether and according to Preston was not quiet about his displeasure over the affair in his conversation with others in the town.

Whilst Preston saw his HG colleagues in a more positive light in comparison with many of his co-workers at KBGS and even some of the members of Toc H, the positive feelings fostered in HG towards his working class colleagues was also set within the wider wartime situation wherein he also felt frustration towards workers as a result of the lack of co-operation and selfishness he perceived in the conduct of many labourers towards their work. He wrote throughout the war of what he felt was the ignobleness of industrial workers he perceived in regard to the slackness of effort on the part of many workers. 'Men will not work over-time if it means that it will bring them within the income-tax scale', he wrote in early 1942.[684] His animosity towards workers in this regard only increased during the war and was inflamed by what he felt to be the unfairness and excessiveness of wage increases workers received during the war. In the last year of the conflict he was unsparing: 'I see from the paper to-day that miners are earning...from £10-15 per week. There is no wonder that some of them take such a lot of time off. They object to paying income tax and so don't work when they become liable. If their wages were not so high they would have to work harder.'[685]

Amongst Keighley's working classes during the war sympathy and a feeling of commonality with communist Russia also gained strength, which was an aversion to Preston. There had been a Keighley branch of the Communist Party of Great Britain prior to the war, but it and pro-Russian sentiment more generally moved out of the margins with Britain's alliance with Russia following Germany's invasion in 1942. In Keighley this saw significant gestures towards the people of Russia. Funds were raised for donation and Keighley was one of the first towns in the country to 'adopt' a town in Russia.[686] Preston had deep misgivings over communism generally and communist Russia in particular. His sentiment towards communist Russia can be summed up in his description of the country as an 'ungodly bully'.[687] He never joined in any of the efforts within the town in support of Russia, indeed, he did not even mention the majority of them.[688] He expressed on several occasions his disgust with the warmth of feeling expressed both within the town and the nation for Russia and felt it was a complete lack of judgement to see the motives of Russia's government as sincerely in the interest of the Allied cause. Preston felt Russia's alliance with the Allies was motivated purely by its own self interest: 'Russia is fighting for her own existence, and it is an accident she is helping us.'[689]

The slackness of effort he perceived at times on the part of workers and the swell of support for Russia did little to ameliorate the contestation Preston felt towards workers and may have tempered his warmth of feeling towards his fellow guardsmen. It is also possible that his feeling towards his fellow Home Guardsmen and a sense of community were also contested as a result of rumours of corruption in HG at a local administrative level which was apparently confirmed to many by the outbreak of a fire at company headquarters. This was widely rumoured to have been set by the quartermaster so that an imbalance in the records would not be able to be determined.[690] Preston also observed that some men were purposely not attending training and parades, and noted subsequently the court martials held for those men involved.[691] Such things may have at least affected morale within the battalion and perception of HG as a site of social cohesion.[692]

6.10 *Middle-class Goodness*

Although Preston felt disagreement with some members of the middle-classes and even saw considerable contention within and amongst what were primarily middle-class organisation during the war,[693] it is also true that was within the middle-class sociability of Toc H and his church community Preston found greater sociability, remaining more able than in HG to engage with things he enjoyed and approved, like promotion of the theatre and more serious-minded discussion. Whilst his relationship with work colleagues was tested by the conflict, within the organisations of Toc H and church he felt much greater mutual feeling and support than in HG. Once HG duties lessened and he was able to return to the weekly gatherings of Toc H, he feelings were clear: 'It was grand to be back again. It was just like returning home....Things seem to be very well, or as well as the war will allow them to be.'[694] The time he spent away from Toc H seemed to have renewed his belief in the goodness of the organisation, and he affirmed his commitment to the organisation for in the future: 'We ought to make an effort at all costs to preserve the fellowship of Toc H and hand it on to the men who come back.'[695]

He also noted the inclusiveness he felt in his church community. During his time in HG he was asked to be on the church council and he continued to be imbued with energy and interest in church through his genuine religious beliefs and by the sermons he attended which were specific sources of direction and motivation for him. He was also very pleased to be asked to help organise a church dramatic society and to direct and perform in the society's first production. It was following the society's first production that Preston received a tremendous boost to his feeling of community within the Church and it would seem Keighley's middle-class community more generally. He reported that whilst cleaning up from the performance:

> suddenly, out of the blue, a presentation was made to me—a book token for a guinea. I was utterly taken aback and was quite unprepared to say anything. However, I pulled myself together and did the best I could in the circumstances.

He was further encouraged by the offer of a middle-class member of the audience to pay the royalties for another performance of the play to be performed in a different venue in the town.[696] He also felt the goodness of

middle-class sociability during a cycling holiday to the Shakespeare Festival in Stratford-upon-Avon which deeply impacted him. He wrote of thanking God for the kindness that he felt was 'wrapped' around him by the people with whom he stayed whilst he was there—relatives of a female colleague at KBGS. His time in Warwickshire, which was spent doing many activities apart from the festival, also impressed something else upon him, that in Warwickshire: 'Life is altogether more cultured'.[697] His experiences whilst there apparently highlighted to him the lack of culture as he saw it in Keighley, which he became slightly depressed over.[698] Days after his return he wrote: 'We have had a very dull evening—the sort of evening I'm beginning to think is typical of Yorkshire.'[699]

6.11 *Conclusion to Home Guard's Impact on Sociability, Community, and Locality*

In sum, HG appears to have had very little impact on deepening or expanding Preston's socialisation within Keighley or his identification with the locality. After his comparison of Keighley HG with London HG, local feeling in relation to HG is never expressed again. In the remainder of his HG experience, his only comments concerning the locality are those which express dismay that such a beautiful landscape should be used for training in such awful ways,[700] and the lack of culture he felt whilst in Yorkshire illustrated in his above comparison with Warwickshire.

His interaction with the working class men with whom he served, does appear to have produced a more genuine acceptance of a greater complexity in human relations than he had previously held. His time alongside his HG colleagues seems to have caused the working classes to become more human to him. He found cause to feel genuine respect for some of the men with whom he served and felt sincere gladness that they also found reason to respect him. Prior to his HG experience Preston had few reference points for interaction with working class individuals and perceived them in the negative connotations of his youth wherein his intellectual pursuits had been belittled. He had spent much of his life trying to move away from that which he associated with working classes. Yet, he could not deny developing a much higher regard for many of the working class men with whom he served in HG. This is in line with Calder's assertion that: 'the power of wartime experiences to draw together people who

would previously have had nothing polite to say to each other has not been exaggerated.'[701] However the effects of this appear to have had little sustaining power. Preston did not seem to develop a particular friendliness with any of the men or to have stayed in contact with any beyond the HG jollification in 1945.[702]

Preston's sociability within the town would seem to have been reinforced and coincided with a renewed zest he felt in fellowship resulting from his conviction in Toc H and the church dramatic society. His renewed zest for Toc H saw him look to new ways to extend service in the community both during and after the war.

Towards his own selfhood, Preston remained convinced that there were more noble ways of defining one's masculine identity than through overt displays of strength and aggression, even if it was in the supposed service of one's nation. Although Preston gave a full effort to HG so as to feel he had accomplished well that which was put before him, his experience in HG refutes notions of the positive self-development offered to members. Throughout his experience the inhumanity inherent in the training caused him instead to see HG as wrenching men from their natures. Whilst his HG training did not become a significant factor in his sense masculine identity or selfhood, his discordance with HG training did not diminish his masculine identity or selfhood either. As with his original orientation to the war, his experiences in HG were negotiated through his own wider range of reference points from sources including pre-war and wartime experiences, his own self-reliance and discipline, his religious beliefs and the religious direction he received during the war, his gentlemanly sensibilities, literature and literary periodicals, the personal security he felt within his spousal relationship, and by strengthening his sense of self through diminution of others, primarily women.

There were however aspects of Preston's wartime experience apart from HG which were much more considerable in affecting his selfhood and his perceptions of society. These were the factors of modernity wherein the individual faced the ascendancy of technical and scientific intelligences in society, reshaping, as Preston saw it, societal values and priorities at nearly every level. He also felt an increasingly disquiet over the growing concern he perceived for the material and the rise of mass-consumer society. Preston's

perceptions of social change and the impact this had on his sense of selfhood are the concerns of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 7 Disjunction with Society: Social Change and Preston's Search for Personal Peace

7.1 *Introduction*

This chapter explores Kenneth Preston's sense of selfhood as the war drew to an end and the parallel disjunction he felt with society. It was in the final years and months of the conflict that he began to perceive that the correctives, as he saw them, to humankind's inhumanity made evident by the war were being forsaken. Rather than recognise that the individual must cultivate ways of living in harmony with others, Preston perceived an attitude of dismissiveness on the part of many towards such ideas in favour of looking forward to the delights of post-war life and a bright new future as envisioned in plans for a New Jerusalem. He perceived that, as Savage describes, an: 'increasing enthusiasm for a different kind of intellectuality, one bound up with science, technique, and skill' was influencing society in what he felt were dangerous ways. Public desire, he perceived, was that the war and the past be wiped away to make way for a modern world—efficient, productive, secular, materialistic, and leisured. Science and technical methods were looked to as the tools by which such a world would be constructed. He felt the social esteem for technical and scientific expertise was at the expense of the arts, intellect, compassionate living, religious devotion, and that such veneration of science and technical expertise altered perspectives of individual responsibility towards oneself, as well as towards wider society, all of which was having, and would continue to have, widespread societal consequences.

Furthermore, the attitudes Preston felt were gaining ascendancy in society through the greater valuation of science and technical instrumentality interacted directly with his own sense of selfhood and of his place within society. Where and how he felt personally impacted in the later years of the war will be explored here, as will his negotiation of the phenomena experienced. As the influence of science and technical intelligence was pervasive, examination will necessarily extend to both Preston's professional and private lives. Attention will be given to tracing the evolution of his perceptions in the final years and months of the war and will explore his evolving emotional response to the changes he

perceived. Analysis throughout will be compared, contrasted with, and informed by scholarly discourse on the topics discussed.

Whilst the profusion of modernist thinking during the war affected a number of areas of society as Preston saw it, which will be discussed later in the chapter, it can be seen to have interacted with his sense of selfhood most in regard to his professional life and so it is here discussion will begin.

7.2 *The Ascendancy of Technicality at KBGS*

Although Robert Mackay points to the war's practical implications in 'wrecking' career plans as one of its most 'onerous' effects,[703] Preston was much more struck by the damage he felt was done to his career by the ways in which technical instrumentality and preference for scientific subjects took shape at his school during the conflict. This is not to say he did not give some consideration to the practical difficulties war imposed on his career, writing at several points of his perception that senior masters, headmasters, and other academic professionals were staying in positions longer, making it more difficult to move into different positions. He was aware also that even if he could get a position elsewhere, it would be very difficult to arrange for housing and to move his household in light of transportation shortages. Yet, it was the wartime ascendancy of scientific and technical methods and expertise which Preston felt had the most significant effect on his career, this was to the extent that he felt his career stymied and his work belittled. This was perceived and experienced at KBGS in distinct, yet interconnected ways.

To begin with, Preston felt the wartime emphasis on efficiency saw one's duty as a citizen and one's willingness to cooperate as equated. In other words, if a new administrative technique or process was presented as good in light of wartime circumstance and one did not agree, their disagreement could be read as contrary to the good of the war effort. He felt the emphasis on efficiency was present at the school as a consequence of the increased duties placed on schools during the war, which demanded greater coordination by staff to meet extra tasks. Preston felt that in such an atmosphere, the headmaster assumed much greater power in giving direction to the staff and that the staff members were put in a much weaker position to oppose the directions of the headmaster,

even if they felt the measures unjust. The staff was, in the idealized duty of the wartime citizen, supposed to be working together to shoulder the burdens war visited upon the school.

Because of the emphasis on cooperation and efficiency, in combination with the well-known increased difficulty the war added to changing jobs, Preston felt the power afforded to the headmaster saw him become tyrannical in the exercise of his authority over the staff, positing: 'I fancy [headmaster] knows he has most of us where he wants us on account of war-time difficulties.'[704] Preston noted that staff members were increasingly treated like a 'lot of little boys', in the degree to which they were directed by the headmaster with little, or no, consultation or discussion.[705] Preston felt the direction of the headmaster became akin to orders,[706] and that nothing was out of bounds for the headmaster to direct the staff to do, or how much he could expect of them.[707] Preston also felt a distinct lack of trust from the headmaster, and observed that the staff members were increasingly being monitored.[708] He noted repeatedly in the diary the presence of the headmaster in the hallways of the school, describing him as lurking about hoping to catch someone or something amiss and generally keeping his eye on the staff. There was also much less care taken to treat members of staff with dignity or to express appreciation for their efforts.

Furthermore, he felt that those who received more favourable treatment by the headmaster were those most willing to adhere to the headmaster's new ethos of efficiency and achieving quantifiable measures of success, such as cricket wins and scholarships.[709] Preston felt agitated that masters were made to feel as though they needed to jump through hoops or, as he described, behave as 'little lickspittles',[710] to win the headmaster's approval. He was discouraged at the extent to which emphasis was placed on achieving quantifiable successes. He felt this had a direct impact upon the education given to the students. The skills to be imparted to the pupils, as he saw it, became much more focused on achieving quantifiable successes and winning at all costs, and much less focused on providing a liberal education.[711]

The headmaster's attitude towards the management of the school was all the more disturbing to Preston as it was seen as reflective of the praising and valuing of the technical-bureaucratic mind and science gaining ascent during

the war through the emphasis given to scientific developments, efficiency, productivity, and dutiful citizenship. Rather than be seen as praiseworthy or desirable, Preston perceived such a methodology towards professional interaction and scholarship as deeply impersonal and even cruel, yet socially credible under the auspices of efficiency and professionalism in light of wartime necessity.

The lack of care the headmaster took to treat the individual with consideration as Preston saw it, greatly contrasted with the approach he felt should be taken towards respecting human dignity, and should be inherent in the conduct of gentlemen. Thus, the headmaster's conduct was equated with coarse manners, a lack of composure, poor imagination, and all around obliviousness to the rules of gentlemanly intercourse and the more noble ends of educating the youth. Preston felt that the emphasis on efficiency was indifferent to the individual, and caused a transition in purpose from educating the youth to running a well-oiled machine.

As was recently discussed in Bernhard Rieger and Martin Daunton's work, *Meanings of Modernity*, Preston's feelings testify to the: 'importance of the category [of modernity] for contemporaries'. Furthermore, Preston's concerns accord with the assertion made by Rieger and Daunton that the: 'debates about the characteristics defining Britain as 'modern' came to include a host of topics that appeared to bear no direct relationship to the process of industrialization.'[712] Preston's observations strongly agree with the argument thus made by the editors that: 'The many prominent changes during this period include a fundamental "shift in authority and prestige" from religious to scientific elites'.[713]

Indeed, the ascent of the value of science during the period has been well asserted amongst scholars. In addition to the above, earlier works by Raymond Williams examined the effects of modernity to society's relation to locality and associative physical community. Angus Calder's *The People's War* concluded that whilst science was still not a preeminent focus in the media, and even that religion and non-scientific programmes remained dominant on the radio, a significant increase in attention and value were given to science and technology during the war.[714] More recently, Ross McKibbin wrote of: 'the prestige of

science and technology in the 1930s and, even more, the 1940s.'[715] David Edgerton discusses the emphasis given to technology and science by the ruling elite, especially Prime Minister Churchill, as a central feature of the war in his work *Britain's War Machine*. MacDonald examines changes specific to literary preferences, whilst Peter Watson discusses this in terms of the more general changes in the intellectual environment of Britain:

> Intellectually speaking, the most significant consequence of World War II was that science came of age. The power of physics, chemistry, and the other disciplines had been appreciated before, of course. But radar, Colossus, and the atomic bomb, not to mention a host of lesser discoveries – like operations research, new methods of pyschological assessment, magnetic tape, and the first helicopters – directly affected the outcome of the war, much more so than the scientific innovations (such as the IQ test) in World War I.

The emphasis on scientific innovation during the war can be seen as well in public discourse, as for instance, in the BBC documentary television series, *Genius of Britain*, which highly praised the scientific innovation of the 1930s and 40s, and the specific men responsible for the most significant achievements.[716]

However, whilst the diffusion and enthusiasm for science and technicality in society are widely recognised within scholarship in broad form, it is asserted here that the diverse and nuanced effects of the ascendancy of scientific and technical methods and attitudes on the population still need to be explored and understood. While many works rightly, and helpfully, locate outward effects of the ascendancy of scientific-technical intelligence, as those outlined above, the effects to the self and the perception of the self in the social in light of the ascension of scientific and technical expertise is still widely unrecognised.

Whilst Preston felt most directly the increased regard for science and technical methods within his own professional life, he felt it beyond his workplace environment as well. He wrote for instance of the decline and in some cases obliteration of arts scholarships[717] and from this despaired: 'war time is a poor time for the arts.'[718] He noted the number of publishers 'offering large money prizes for new work', postulating: 'I expect that what is the matter really is that writers are engaged in a great many other ways and have no time.'[719] Preston's perception of the diminution of the arts at his own school as well as in society more widely strongly accords with Calder's analysis of the diminution of the arts:

‘scorn was poured on the “verbalism” of the arts graduates trained in classics and the humanities who still dominated British public life.’[720] In a similar vein, Mike Savage attests to the way in which the war gave strength to the rise in scientific-technical intelligence. The social elites in the postwar period were described by Savage as the: ‘group which was to seize on the opportunities for technical and scientific expertise elaborated in the military regime of the Second World War to carve out a distinctive place in English Society.’[721] This change in social valuation, and the recognition by historians of such, Savage asserts: ‘leads us to understand cultural change in the 1950s and 1960s less in terms of the widely discussed mobilization of literary and cultural figures, famously in the figure of the “angry young men”, and more in terms of the less visible yet ultimately more significant assertion of “soft” scientific values.’[722]

Preston felt the societal wide concern with scientific and technocratic expertise resulted in a de-humanisation and diminution of the individual by various entities, including the government and marketing world, but also at a more intimate level in the outlook of individuals towards the more instrumentalised way in which people perceived their social spaces, especially in regard to professional spaces.[723]

He saw this instrumentality in direct relation to the war: in the government’s treatment of young men as ‘cannon fodder’[724], but he also saw this as having an indirect impact on matters of daily life such as he experienced at his workplace, as well as in other ways. He saw this for instance especially in the attitude taken by young adult men towards advancing their careers. He also felt that the way in which people conceived of relationships or association in terms of personal advancement was reflective of the instrumentalisation of daily life. He saw this as disingenuous, and pathetic in its lack of integrity. This was a large part of his concern with emerging positive connotations of technical expertise: those who displayed it seemed to Preston as aiming for strategic upward mobility and the techniques used were seen as acceptable though they displaced and in many instances ran contrary to treating individuals and social association with dignity. He wrote of being angered at a man who came to his knowledge as having used his involvement in Toc H simply for recommendation towards securing better employment. Preston felt that sincere human relationships were evidence of the good that could be created by humankind and were of far more value

than the advancement one could gain from strategic manoeuvring. Such sentiment would be later echoed in the works of E. M. Forster, who argued that personal relationships, offered the individual: 'a little order into the contemporary chaos.'[725] Preston also anticipated Forster's sentiment in regard to the value of personal relationships in a technically oriented society:

> One must be fond of people and trust them if one is not to make a mess of life, and it is therefore essential that they should not let one down. They often do. The moral of which is that I must, myself, be as reliable as possible, and this I try to be. But reliability is not a matter of contract—that is the main difference between the world of personal relationships and the world of business relationships....Personal relationships are despised today. They are regarded as bourgeois luxuries, as products of a time of fair-weather which is now past, and which we are urged to get rid of them, and to dedicate ourselves to some movement or cause instead.[726]

Preston felt that the esteem for efficiency and for outward success was creating a narcissistic people by placing emphasis on success to the extent that success was more important than the means by which one got there. The adoption of a technocratic ethos did not promote an egalitarian or truly meritocratic society as he saw it. Instead, Preston felt that the adoption of a technically prescribed work ethos in society espoused essentially market fundamentalism. Preston saw this at the school, where instead of a financial market, there arose a school-based market where greater funding was given to science and maths over the arts and humanities because the former were seen as more likely to have students receive scholarships. In addition, rather than rewarding hardworking, talented, innovative masters, Preston felt those masters rewarded were those in the certain fields, with the fewest scruples, who were the best at cultivating the right connections. He perceived that connections were increasingly required to secure positions at the school and elsewhere in one's career. Those whom the headmaster favoured were given special responsibility grants and Preston felt easier work-loads. He believed also that the headmaster used his connections to aid in the success of scholarships at the school and in some unremarkable boys' ability to get into good colleges. He wrote that the way one pupil secured a place at Cambridge was: 'only accounted for on the theory that [the headmaster] quite definitely has "a pull" at Sidney.'[727] As a result, Preston came to believe that the efforts one made to give the boys a sense of value and worth, and to truly educate the youth, were seen as less important than the

ability to turn out scholarship recipients and wins in cricket. Thus, as in market fundamentalism, the masters and the boys were subjected to outward comparison, evaluation, and quantification, which had the effect of greatly diminishing Preston's sense of worth in regard to his professional life.

This accords with Paul Verhaeghe's recent discussion in *What About Me? The Struggle for Identity in a Market-Based Society* of market fundamentalism wherein outward assertions of individual opportunity are not reflected in the reality of how the market actually works. In regard to the workplace, Verhaeghe writes that market fundamentalism claims to support unrestricted competition, which allows for individual effort and innovation, yet the workplace is in reality an inflexible environment of top down implementation wherein the individual is measured through surveillance, assessment, and monitoring. The workplace does not then really encourage or nourish the individual, or allow for difference in technique or variety of effort, but rewards only those who measure up to standards set by administrators. As a result, the workplace causes a lack of confidence in the individual, and greater competition amongst peers, which combine to increase stress and overall workplace dissatisfaction.[728]

Preston's descriptions of his workplace were very symptomatic of a market fundamentalist environment. Despite trying to be an innovative and dedicated master, he felt increasingly undervalued. The filling of positions consequent of men leaving for other positions exemplified what he saw as the bureaucratic approach taken by the headmaster. The acceptability of such an approach was enhanced, as Preston saw it, by the shortage of people to fill positions in the context of war. Yet, Preston felt the headmaster was simply using the shortage of teacher candidates as a pretence to use unscrupulous measures to get the most prestigious candidates. In the headmaster's attempt to bring people onto the staff whom he felt would most enhance the school's prestige and contribute to the successes of the school, Preston felt the existing staff members were treated like pawns. There was considerable manoeuvring on the part of the headmaster to get certain people into positions on the staff. Preston felt his own efforts were disregarded when asked to give up some of his Sixth Form work to another man, so as to 'bribe' the man to take a position on the staff.[729] Moreover, the maths and sciences were increasingly favoured, which Preston again attributed to the ascent of science during war. History also was favoured

over English, as was Cambridge over Oxford, as the headmaster had read History at Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, and because he had connections, as Preston and other members of the staff understood it, which allowed for ‘a lot of back-stairs work...in the awarding of scholarships’ to certain pupils.[730] The suspicion of Preston’s that the headmaster favoured History over English and that this was used to directly influence the pupils was incidentally attested to by Asa Briggs in his memoir. Therein Briggs states: ‘[the headmaster] would never let his brightest boys read English over History.’[731] As the quote by Briggs attests, Preston perceived that the headmaster felt little regard for English and consequently valued Preston’s efforts to a lesser extent than other subjects simply as a result of his personal preference.[732] He also felt the headmaster’s low regard for English saw him place his head of English (Preston) as the subject of his jokes. On one occasion, Preston noted that the headmaster brought some education authorities by his classroom and asked in a mocking manner whether he was studying Shakespeare, as though Shakespeare was all Preston ever taught.

He felt that giving a full effort in one’s job was no longer considered a social value. Despite his devotion to his subjects and to giving a full effort as a teacher, his attempts to apply elsewhere were met with little interest, which Preston suspected was partially due to his lack of connections in the field.[733] Additionally, his efforts at the school prior to and during the war went unacknowledged, whereas maths and science masters were repeatedly favoured during the war.[734] In the headmaster’s aiming at successive targets, Preston felt a general lack of appreciation for the efforts one put forward had become pervasive and in recognizing only certain successes, many efforts were wrongly diminished. He wrote of this: ‘There is no soul in our job. No one is concerned to notice a man who carries out a job faithfully through the years. No steps are taken to make it more worth his while to stay.’[735]

Because Preston fundamentally disagreed with the ideas informing such an ethos as he saw taking shape, he did not feel the need to go along with the new prescriptions for success as he saw them. He remained adamantly opposed to the kind of deference he saw others offering the headmaster which would bring them the possibility of favour. He also refused to see success as the end goal of

education and continued to see the need to enlighten minds and hearts as much as aim at scholarship successes.

Yet, the atmosphere of his working environment during the war, and the diminishment he felt to his sense of himself in society made him at times quite miserable. Increasingly through the war Preston felt as though professional accomplishment was becoming out of his reach, no longer were there men of character in high places, but rather technocrats whose praise he felt little desire to obtain. His workplace left him uninspired and cynical. Although Preston felt affirmed in his values and approaches to interacting with others, this did not prevent him from feeling increasingly like an outsider, out of step with the forward movement, and at times massively at odds with society.

7.3 *'Knowing' and 'Seeing' as Sources of Secure Selfhood*

The feeling of disjunction Preston came to feel with much of society caused him to search for how to make sense of his situation. This joined with the questioning posture he had taken early in the war to locate the deeper sources of war and human conflict. Where in the beginning of the war he looked for those forces which had propelled the world to war, he came to expand his questioning and look for those forces behind human behaviour more generally. The arts, philosophy, and religion remained fundamental to his understanding and became sources of orientation which not only informed abstract categories and questions, but which were elemental also to his search for secure selfhood. For Preston, a secure sense of selfhood was found through his orientation within the arts, philosophy, and religion by bringing, as he saw it, truth to bear on the situation. His orientation through the arts, philosophy, and religion allowed him to form a sense of coherence and stand in a position of what he considered true comprehension. This comprehension, even if nothing could be done about it, offered Preston the ability to accept things, and, therefore, brought some peace and a sense of sanctuary from the judgements of the world. As such, what he felt to be a truer understanding of the world around him became a source of secure selfhood.

Increasingly, the natural world became another area he felt was a source of light and knowledge and which consequently was felt to be an area which

informed and guided his comprehension. The ideas raised by each area interacted with one another and formed an interpretive lens through which he looked upon the world.

His sense of intellectually joining like-minded others through the fields of philosophy, religion, and the arts, was also enhanced by his feeling of disjunction and helped him to not feel alone in his views and understandings. This imagined community of artists, writers, and religiously oriented individuals also offered a very real opportunity to engage with what he felt to be rational discourse. He continued to augment his views, as well as at other times feel some reassurance of his views as a result of this engagement. Through this imaginative exchange of ideas, Preston felt a sense of peace, a place he could go to learn and grow in a safe place, yet one which was also intellectually stimulating and stabilising to the self. Moreover, engaging with these various areas often offered a feeling of being refreshed and revived and, thus, was important to his wartime morale.

Yet, whilst this imagined community did serve to ease tensions, it was not enough to ameliorate entirely his feelings of disjunction and discontent with society. He continued to feel as early twentieth-century Continental Modernists postulated that it was right to question humankind's rational intellect, and to take a questioning and exploratory stance towards human thought, motivation, and behaviour.[736]

In questioning the apparent reality of things as he did, Preston appears a destructuralist, postmodern thinker, but he did not see himself as such. It would be more accurate to say that he saw himself in terms one finds in Clive Bell's description of the true artist: 'a seeker of truth and beauty, a shunner of vulgarity and coarseness.'[737] The resonance he felt with the sense of the artist's disjuncture from the world is, for instance, evident in his comments whilst reading Proust:

> For just as Vinteuil, in common with every other great musician, seems to him to have sought in each new work to recapture and to recreate the wonderful lost harmonies of some half-forgotten home, so every true artist is forever striving to reach a lost country that he dimly remembers, but from which the routine of his life seems completely to have separated him. This hidden goal, with all the truth, the significance, the profound

> and elusive beauty of a different state of consciousness dimly discerned but rarely realized, is the source form which flow the only waves of true reality, however faint, that ever reach us—the only intimations of immortality that we can ever know." There it is again "the true reality" which lies behind the apparent reality and which is seen only intermittently and in "heaven-sent moments" as Arnold might have said.[738]

An other-worldly dimension took shape in Preston's perceptions. He wrote of feeling as though he was searching for his true home but which was elusive and beyond his grasp. He wondered if comprehension would offer the feeling of sureness he feels is at times just out of reach. As a religious believer, his feelings in this regard interacted with his religious beliefs. He sought to reconcile religious doctrine with earthly matters, and to provide insight into his increasing feeling of disjunction with the world. Rather than adhere to his faith blindly, or claim faith as independent of reason, he saw that religion rationally informed on the nature and meaning of things. He was excited in 1942 to encounter C.S. Lewis through Lewis's wireless broadcasts: 'He is making just that sort of intellectual case for Christianity that I have been making for years and he seems to be answering all the questions that I have myself been asking.'[739]

Religion was of real consequence in how Preston understood and negotiated the world. Throughout the war, he came to feel that the world hardened the emotions and sensitivities of a person. He wrote of how wartime experiences such as being forced into HG and in the selfishness of his work colleagues had made him bitter. Yet, he admitted that exhortations from religious sources and religious guidance kept this hardening influence of the world at bay. He also wrote that certain sermons had a very real effect in compelling him and others to action and to doing good when otherwise: 'our natural laziness and inertia would never have roused us into doing had we been left to ourselves.'[740]

The compelling nature with which Preston perceived religious doctrine raises some intriguing points about religion at the time in the degree to which local pastors were forward thinking. Rather than rigidly adhering to doctrine, Preston's church leaders were adamant in their encouragement for congregation members to think more on issues in alternative ways. At one point Preston wrote of his parson's sermon: 'This morning he preached a very

interesting sermon on the subject of miracles and suggested that in the form they have come down to us they have been described not as they actually occurred but as they have been coloured by the mental equipment of the person who told them.'[741] Later, Preston wrote of attending a sermon on the harmfulness of ignorance, wherein people were encouraged to gain knowledge of history, psychology, and anthropology so to contemplate issues for themselves.[742] At another time he described how a pastor spoke on how 'often those who were not quite orthodox were those who were the best practical Christians whereas the narrowly rigid were often the people who aliented rather than won people to Christ.'[743]

The desire Preston experienced to engage critically, and personally, with the ideas presented by churchmen at this time may have contributed to his perception of the mistakenness of society to disregard religion. He read considerably of the combined topics of religion and science and did not see these areas as necessarily in opposition. Preston was especially interested in writing on the emergence of science in society and particularly the way science and religion could be considered in light of one another.[744] Preston felt that others' disregard for religion was, thus, not founded on actual disagreement with religious doctrine, even in the context of growing esteem for science, but was a lifestyle choice and the result of mental laziness—religion did not provide easy answers readily enough. Thus, whilst personally religion was a source of intellectual reassurance, offering a secure sense of purpose and understanding, and to some extent a sense of community,[745] the departure of many from religious belief also served to enhance his feeling of disjunction with society.

7.4 *Breaking Free of the 'Natural Attitude'*

Historical analysis of how people responded to the war is largely consistent with the assertion of Max Hastings in a recent work on the conflict: 'One of the most important truths about the war, as indeed about all human affairs, is that people can interpret what happens to them only in the context of their own circumstances.'[746] Rose also places emphasis on understanding through the available social discourse represented in cultural products: 'wartime experiences were filtered through the available public culture of the time.'[747] Connelly takes this notion further to contend that the sheer numbers of cultural

products containing certain message attest to their saliency with the population and are, therefore, reflective of public mood, opinions, and perceptions at the time.[748]

That individuals interpret life through their own experience finds some support outside of historical enquiry in the social sciences. Sociologist James Aho, for instance, draws from philosopher Edmund Husserl, to explain this in the following:

> To the average person the life-world is experienced in what Husserl calls the naive or "natural attitude." This means that the world's things present themselves to consciousness as being parts of an understandable coherency; that they are taken as given in the nature of things—themselves, and hence not essentially alterable; that they therefore *must* be, should be, have to be what they are; and that insofar as this is the case, then all reasonably sane persons must perceive them the same way.[749]

Yet, Aho tells us sociologists recognise the possibility for people to question the apparent reality and to be, at times: 'liberated from the sway of worldly things'[750]—the subtle forms of power, regulation and control[751] which the individual is subjected to in society. Through Preston's appreciation and consideration of literature, the arts, religion, philosophical contemplations, and, as will be explored shortly, the natural world, beyond his immediate cultural resources he was able to break free from the 'natural attitude'. Engagement with these areas served to widen his reference points in perceiving and understanding the world, and also his perception of himself and himself in the world. There is an important element of modern selfhood present here. In deconstructing the permanence of the world around him, Preston knowingly shattered what Aho describes as: 'the trancelike hold of the natural attitude', thus, imparting a significant degree of autonomy.

The way Preston's private world intersected with contemporary cultural resources throws into question the veracity of taking cultural products as the key interpretative lens to the time. Moreover, looking at the most prevalent cultural resources as indicative of those understandings which were most salient with the population, ignores the power of the local—local press and organisations, charitable, religious, trade, even the natural environs. It also ignores the wider reference points available to individuals, but primarily it

ignores the interpretive ability of the individual to filter and in some cases reject altogether that which was being presented in social discourse. That Preston looked to resources outside of popular cultural streams had a tremendous effect upon his understanding of the situation and of his own place in the wartime context. This is illustrated for instance in a contemplation prompted at one point during his personal reading. Whilst reading Sir Walter Scott's *The Antiquary* he saw the understanding of a character in relation to his own situation: 'Lovel's theory is that "the ferocious warrior is remembered, and the peaceful abbots are abandoned to forgetfulness and oblivion." Perhaps he is right. It is the astounding that lives in common memory.'[752] This thought can be read as a means of finding a positive and acceptable connotation of his non-militaristic role in the war through a literary source significantly outside the culture of his own time.

Thus we see that reflecting on circumstances in this way, through literature and other sources, he not only joined with like-minded others, but was encouraged and enabled to see phenomena beyond specific times and places, and to rather see events in terms of what he held to be timeless truths. This use of an imagined community also imparted an especially secure sense of modern selfhood in the flexibility and autonomy it granted to the individual to decide to whom or what he subscribed. In this way, the individual was not limited to their specific time or cultural context. Thus, Preston was not bound in his conception of himself by local identity, national identity, or even an identity of the time in which he lived. Yet despite the personal equilibrium he obtained from this, it did not entirely assuage his increasing sense in the final years of the war of being ill at ease with the world, or perhaps more to the point, with the world of human kind.

7.5 *The Natural World*

In contrast to the world of human kind, the natural world increasingly seemed an inviting alternative to Preston. Throughout the war he came to turn to the natural world as an escape from the discord he felt with society. His time in nature took on a range of meanings. To begin with, being in nature offered freedom from society. As he often explored nature atop his bicycle George Bernard Shaw's assertion that cycling has the quality of identifying one's 'own self-reliance' is

also pertinent. The sense of self-reliance imparted by cycling coupled with the absence of 'society' in nature made for a potent source of secure selfhood. The argument can be taken further to assert that in cycling through nature, on his own, and setting his own course, Preston was to some extent living out his own 'hero-saga'. 'These tales' writes Aho, 'all acknowledge the reality of males slashing themselves free from the nurturing—swallowing entanglements of the Great Round to experience themselves as independent, self-governing actors.'[753] We see this manifest in the small-scale in such comments as: 'After tea I saw some sunshine, the first of the whole day in the Kildwick direction and so I set out to seek it.'[754] It is seen in greater manifestation in Preston's annual cycling holiday, which during the war years was always taken alone, always made possible by him cycling to his destinations, and always a source of exultation.

An adventure-like quality infused his experiences generally in the outdoors, especially those experiences in which he cycled. Whilst cycling was not for Preston a sporting exercise, as had become popular in inter-war Britain, the excitement and allure came from not knowing exactly what awaited one over the hill or around the next bend, as well as in the action of cycling on an open road, and the thrill he felt at the beauties with which he encountered.[755] The sense of discovery and freedom he felt in nature was capped with feelings often of exhilaration over the beauty of nature to combine to make his outings on his bicycle and in the outdoors a break with daily life. The feeling of freedom and release was particularly apparent when he described of one outing: 'I could have shouted at those blue hills'.

He took pleasure as well not only in the release he felt in nature, but in seeing the natural world as itself 'free'—existing apart from humankind. Though he recognised the countryside as having been shaped to a large degree by humankind, he distinguished this from nature itself. He saw nature as much in the snowdrop flower which suddenly appeared in his front garden as in the sweeping views of the moorlands surrounding his home. Furthermore, he felt the natural world would always work to some extent in its own way, and would exist apart from the will of man, and if man left it alone, it would continue in its existence. It seems that Preston wanted to see nature almost in defiance of

man. He wrote after spying a beautiful scene: ‘The war can do nothing about all this. It may paint our red buses gray but it cannot alter the colour of one of our bluebells, nor has there been any suggestion yet that white blossom is unpatriotic’.[756] Nature was free from the dictates of the human will, of worldly agenda, politics, or workplace manoeuverings.

For Preston, the beauty and atmosphere nature offered as a result of its freedom from humankind were sources of tranquillity and served as an unparalleled source of inner-rejuvenation during the war. He noted at one point: ‘the fields upon fields of such irradiated green looked like a vision of the promised land. Such a magnificent panorama under such lovely conditions made the heart leap within one.’[757] It is notable that the natural wonder he felt existed locally was apparently somewhat lost on Preston prior to the war. Whilst he enjoyed nature in his youth and whilst in Oxford and Yeovil, upon return to Keighley, the local countryside was, apparently, taken for granted. He wrote of discussing this with his wife in early 1941. Prior to the war they had sought destinations to visit, such as the Lake District, but being forced to stay local caused them to realise anew the beauties around them.[758]

During the war, Preston underwent a considerable change in his appreciation for the local countryside as a result of being forced to search for appropriate, permissible sources of leisure. Additionally, the war prompted him into the countryside to gather fruit as well as some other materials in short supply consequent of the war, such as woodchips to light the fire. He, along with his family, also discovered the locality by venturing to nearby towns to search for items not obtainable in Keighley. These trips were often taken as opportunities to explore and enjoy the local countryside.

In coming closer to the countryside, a distinct attachment developed towards what Preston perceived as the unique features and qualities of natural Yorkshire.[759] This attachment is detected in what became a noticeable tendency to see visitors as outsiders. He noted this especially as the war drew to a close and petrol became available to the public again allowing considerable numbers of people to flock to beauty spots such as Gordale Scar and Malham Cove. Preston felt visitors did not truly appreciate the countryside, but used the landscape only as a temporary backdrop to their day out without any real

consideration of the natural world. He began to feel that Yorkshire's wonders were being spoiled by overcrowding. In his increased contact with nature, Preston came to see humankind as having a widespread and generally negative impact on the earth. Whilst throughout the war he regretted the destruction the conflict wrought to the world, he came to see this as characteristic of humankind's interaction with the natural world more generally. Humans were increasingly seen as immoderate, polluting creatures. He expressed this forcefully in the final year of the war:

> The air was as clear as could be, except where Keighley's thousands of houses spread up the valley to Ingrow and each little chimney belched out its contribution of smoke and sullied the pure, crisp air. One felt somehow from the heights what a miserable polluting creature man is. Where he was not, the great hills were clean and clear. The valley was a smudge and one wondered how living creatures could breathe in such an atmosphere.[760]

In this way, Preston began to take greater notice and appreciation of the natural world around him. He spied beauties he never realised or had long forgotten. His joys became such that he would write of these experiences with awe and wonder. In these experiences he came to feel something inexplicable, without words or complete coherence, but which bore a goodness and a truth to him nevertheless. He wrote of this feeling in the following way:

> these experiences are somehow more real and more valuable (although they are obviously not in any practical sense) than the experiences of the normal world. These feelings are so many loopholes which seem to give glimpses of the *lacrimae rerum*—of the pathos at the heart of humanity, and yet they are something more than this.[761]

His religious beliefs compelled him also to see God's hand in nature, and nature was increasingly seen as a less-corrupted form of God's creation than humankind had allowed itself to become. Coming into contact with the natural world to a greater degree then was something he appreciated all the more during the war for being refreshing not only to mind and body, but to what he felt to be his spirit.[762] In his search for truth, he saw in nature manifestations of the divine and therein he took on a more Romantic feeling for nature, where nature allowed him to come into contact with the sublime.[763]

His feeling towards nature, however, may also have been a reflection from the re-emergence of the attraction of the natural world which grew up in the inter-

war period which Michael Bartholomew suggests was a result of people trying to locate a: 'realm of the enduring and beautiful, in the face of the dislocation, brutality and meaningless' imparted by the First World War.[764] Particularly notable amongst these qualities is that of the 'enduring'. Preston felt that because of nature's enduring quality, what truths nature held (the need for simplicity, purity, cooperative interaction), were seen as lasting truths. This appealed to him during the war as he felt in a climate wherein things were increasingly taken as relative and that society was questioning divine laws, such as morality, kindliness, and appreciation for humanity.

Immersing himself in the natural world he felt more at home and more stable in himself. Where man was illogical over policies, passions, and the war caused humans to be wrenched from their natures, the natural world seemed an authentic representation of how things were supposed to be and represented a space not entangled in war and confusion. Nature became a more noble sphere. While humankind contorted itself and existed in disharmony, nature flourished in following its natural course.

This feeling, in addition to the personal exultation he felt in nature, combined to give Preston a belief in an edifying power of nature. The degree of refreshment offered to him by nature's beauties and simplicities spoke directly as he saw it to the need for a reorientation of life and of the need to take joy in different ways. He increasingly throughout the war delighted in that which he saw as being freely offered by nature—the renewal of the world in spring, picking berries, beautiful sunsets, and picnics by a stream. He wrote that he felt as though he were entering into what he called 'a spirit of delight in nature' and that he understood what Chaucer had written of feeling delight in the coming of spring. He noted this in the following remark:

> These signs of the coming spring are tremendous heart-uplifters in these days, after all the dark days it is good to know that spring is on its way. I rather think that we are beginning the better, in these hard days, to be able to enter more than ever we could before into those feelings that used to animate folk in medieval times, at the coming of spring.[765]

Later, he wrote: 'I have been struck this year as never before by the way Providence provides us with a succession of decorations for the countryside—successive waves of colour.'[766] He also increasingly saw nature as symbolic,

writing at one point of feeling genuinely heartened to see nature fighting through the barren winter, to hold on until spring when it could once again flourish. At the sight of in a single snowdrop pushing through the snow in his front garden his spirit lifted in exaltation: 'Here was something to fight depression and black-out blues and apprehension about second fronts and dark mornings and groping in the blackness. Oh! It was as good as a tonic.'[767]

As the war went on, he came to feel the rightness of taking time to reflect on life in such a way, and the ordering of one's life through thoughtful reflection. Taking time to treat the inner-self brought greater awareness and appreciation for the immaterial as it drew one's attention away from day-to-day concerns and therefore offered perspective, calmed illogical tendencies, and appeased irritations.[768] Like D.H. Lawrence, Preston came to feel the need for society to recover: 'natural physical contact and the simplest living processes.'[769]

His regard for nature also points to an agreement between Preston and the literary mind. Comparing and contrasting the natural world with the world of men has long had a presence in English literature. Raymond Williams wrote that England's literary history: 'is perhaps richer than any other in the full range of its themes of country and city'.[770] This was a literature to which Preston was intimately drawn. Yet, rather than simply espousing the themes found in that literature, the similarity of Preston's views with literary figures seems more likely a result of a similarity in the nature of the writer to consider and contemplate what is around them.

7.6 *The Arts as Refreshing and Revelatory*

Like nature, the arts too were seen as having both a revelatory and a refreshing quality and were an important aspect to increasing his consciousness and maintaining his equilibrium during the war. He wrote that he felt that: 'the world is revealing itself to me through art as never before,' which he noted in regard to the irony that this should happen just as the arts were being diminished by the need for the country to focus its energy and material goods to the war effort.[771] During the war, he constantly considered the world through the art that was available. Pictorial art was the least available, and he noted only attending the

exhibitions by local students at the college. Theatre and literature were the artistic mediums with which he primarily engaged.

Preston's interaction with the arts accords with Hinton's finding that many Mass Observers saw the arts as 'a means of focusing the spirit on its real objective by cutting it loose from the entanglements of living'.[772] Like nature, art was a contemplative space. Preston wrote of this in the following way, intending it as a comment upon himself, although he spoke in regard to the collective: 'Our warring natures are pacified by art. Normally we are pulled in different directions...momentarily the struggle ceases and we are enabled to catch a distant glimpse of that distant country to which we are striving.'[773] Again we see Preston felt that certain mediums brought humankind closer to its true self, perhaps because he felt interacting with the arts suspended the lived reality, allowing the self to experience a moment's freedom to explore an alternate space and alternative ways of being. His engagement with theatre also offered him considerable positive social feedback, supplying him with some sense of worth in society, which was perhaps especially significant in consideration of the devaluation he felt in his professional life at this same time.

7.7 *War Weary*

Preston's engagement with these areas—religion, nature, and the arts—not only served as secure sources of selfhood for Preston during the war, but were also vital means of coping and maintaining his morale. This is important as even though Britain was not to suffer many of the difficulties other European nations experienced, Preston gives presence to the ways in which living in a state of war bears consequence upon the individual both directly and indirectly. For instance, he felt almost constant concern over the war's progression, as Knight reminds us: 'for the people living through and creating events in the Second World War there was no guarantee of a happy ending.'[774] Preston had a sense of living in a state of flux with little sense of real stability. From the beginning of the diary, he conveyed a belief that the Allies would ultimately be victorious, but the unknown duration of the conflict and the levels of death and destruction that would be reached before the war's conclusion imparted a sense of unknown and the anticipation of dread onto everyday life.

The acute concern he felt in early 1941 over the possibility of imminent invasion turned to a soul-wearing sort of feeling not long thereafter, wherein he felt: 'The weeks slip by very quickly and yet we are none of us really living now in any real sense'.[775] He staggered at the consumption of resources the conflict entailed (£14,000,000 a day), remarking of the expenditure of so much money towards the conflict: 'It is a dear way to be miserable.'[776]

Deprivations consequent on the war went beyond having to be creative in how one made the Christmas pudding with limited wartime rations, or decorated the bomb shelter, often made light of in popular depictions of the war.[777] For instance, the shortage of doctors caused acute concern on several occasions, including when his wife, Kathleen, had a severe cycle accident that cut and scraped skin on the face, and broke her teeth. It took considerable searching to locate a doctor. He eventually discovered what was apparently a retired physician some distance away from the crash site. The same incident highlights the difficulty the shortage of transportation caused, which in this instance meant that Kathleen, accompanied by Preston and their son, had to continue on bicycle to return home following which Kathleen spent the next two days in bed.[778]

The lack of public transportation also meant that Preston had to cycle to work in the winters, which were notably severe during several years of the conflict. Cycling in the blackout also made for an often fraught experience, on one occasion he was injured, which considerably disconcerted him in regard to night travel afterward.

The blackout was also depressing, as was the coldness which the household endured attempting to self-ration heating fuels. The shortages of goods in addition to the blackout also put a significant damper on many aspects of life. Social calls lessened considerably.

Difficult too was watching as his own town and the locality, though far from the front lines, were transformed by the war. The moorlands became tank training grounds,[779] and a beautiful area of the countryside became covered by a large ordnance factory.[780] Vast swathes of moorland also came under the plough to support the country's need for food consequent on reduced imports.[781] Trees

which had lined the roads approaching Keighley for generations and within the town itself were felled to supply the need for timber.[782] Preston sadly noted the displacement he foresaw to the birdlife in the area.[783] The majority of railings too were removed, as in towns across the nation.[784] A number of shops in the town had to close as a consequence of changes to production and, or the shortage of workers. Large water pipes were laid on several of the main streets to pump water from the river for fire-fighting purposes, which regularly tripped people up, including Preston.[785] His own house, which he had striven so hard to acquire for his family, also fell in need of numerous repairs, which could not be attended to due to the lack of supplies owing to the war.[786]

Most disheartening of all was the loss of life the wra entailed. A friend was killed when a bomb landed on a movie theatre, and several of Preston's former students were killed in action abroad. Moreover, he often noted the casualties consequent of road accidents at home. He felt infuriated at one point upon seeing a group of young soldiers pass by him on the road, apparently on their way to one of the theatres of battle, writing once he got home of what a terrible waste of life war was.

7.8 *Home Life*

Whilst the outside of his home became depleted, the inside of the home increasingly became a source of comfort and gladness. Preston grew weary of the onslaught of public life the war caused. As with nature, his home became a place a sanctuary. So too did the family life that was nurtured there between he, his wife, and their son.

Preston's household is simultaneously omnipresent and inconspicuous in the diary; although his home life and his role as a husband and as a father are constant features, they are rarely directly discussed. This is perhaps by virtue of the apparent un-tumultuous nature of these roles. As Hinton states, 'discontent is history's driver',[787] rather than, in Preston's case, the ability of two people to peaceably harmonise their lives with one another and build a loving home. It is the discontent present in other situations which perhaps drew Preston's discussion to those matters in much more detail. Yet, his home life and the contentment he felt therein quietly, almost inconspicuously, contrasts with his

tensions throughout the war. It was almost always in his home he felt able to compose himself enough to write in the diary. His gladness at being able to spend time at home was expressly stated frequently.

Part of the sanctuary-like quality of his home was of course the good relationships shared by the inhabitants. The happiness of a marriage can not, of course, be ascertained from the testimony of one side alone, but in as much as Preston perceived, his marriage and the home environment they created together was in the main, a contented, even happy, one. He and his wife, Kathleen, were by all indications a companionate and intimate pair, and he gave considerable time and energy to the relationship.

The company his wife and their son provided significantly added to the enjoyment of home life, and of life generally. During the war they spent much of their leisure time together in the countryside, picking berries, and cycling to towns sometimes with little excuse beyond exploring a new route or seeing what the shops might hold in days of limited supplies. On these trips they often rested by a river or some pleasant place to read, share a picnic meal, or simply to take in the views. He appreciated his wife's knowledge of the countryside, expressing at one time: 'I am beginning to find the hedgerows most fascinating under Kath's tuition.'[788]

He also felt obviously contented in his home because of the comforts of the house itself. It was located on the outskirts of Keighley in the middle-class neighbourhood of Utley, high enough in elevation to be above the smog of Keighley, and it was near to the moors. It was a semi-detached property which offered a greater degree of privacy. The spaces within were pleasing also. He maintained a considerable library of books. The family room was a place wherein comfort and enjoyment was had, and he wrote often during the wintertime of sitting in the room with the family listening to a wireless programme and enjoying the warmth of the fireplace.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the solace that Preston's home life provided was related to an extent to his standing in the household, and the shared understandings within. Moreover, he was a home owner, not a tenant which also contributed to a sense of security and control, but also to the house

as a place of refuge. This strongly accords with Tosh's conclusion that: 'the deeply felt appreciation of home as a place of peace, seclusion and refuge would have meant little without certain standards of comfort, privacy and routine.'[789]

Yet, the genuine enjoyment he felt as a result of the familial environment cultivated within the home is also in line with Laura King's findings surrounding rising male domesticity in the mid-twentieth century. It was clearly not a matter of having to: 'rather belligerently withdraw' to his home as McKibbin informs was often the attitude amongst Northern middle-class males who: 'preferred the social world of their workforce rather than that of their wives.'[790] Preston felt decided enjoyment in his wife's company, and even found it preferential at times to his male companions. Even though Toc H was a cause in which he believed, and he felt conviction in the good character of those with whom he served, he often wrote of regretting having to leave home to attend meetings.

7.9 *The Diary*

In the desire to break free from society through distancing himself, physically and mentally, by being in nature and in his familial space, we see that for Preston, a sense of wellbeing and succour were increasingly throughout the war located in the personal. In addition to nature and family, his diary writing was another significant personal space during the war. It is also true that *Diary* writing was a substitute in some ways for the creative work he longed to be able to create, but felt unable to do. In this way, writing was a considerable personal conflict for Preston. Whilst the written word was clearly amongst his greatest joys in life, his inability to formulate and convey ideas through the written word at a level with which he felt satisfied[791] was, it seems, a considerable source of personal discontent. Nevertheless, his faith in the written word was such that he turned to it to help him through the ordeal of war.

Through the *Diary* Preston vented frustrations, set down anxious thoughts over the war, gave expression to that which he thought but felt he could not say elsewhere, and worked out the sense of dislocation and contestation he felt.[792] And whilst the writing was not for a book or a poetic work he otherwise aspired to create, he took pleasure in exploring the creative and imaginative aspects of

his nature through describing and staging the world around him.[793] Writing was also a tool used to process his contemplation of those thoughts aroused by engagement with literature, philosophy, religion, nature, the arts, and his social world and therein to restore his equilibrium and maintain his composure.

Indeed, the aid the *Diary* offered towards maintaining Preston's composure was perhaps its most important role during the conflict. The need for composure was felt in connection with his position in a middle-class profession, but also, it would seem, he subscribed to the need for this himself as part of civility, in order to prevent others' discomfort, as well as to maintain composure for his own well-being and self-regard. He was, as we have seen and will see, often vexed by circumstances of and societal reactions to the war. Yet, in this vexation he did not subscribe to social attitudes towards emotionality which popular opinion Aho tells us: 'considers moodiness and emotionality as contrary to rational knowing', or, as Aho continues as: 'an illness of mind…absent of reason'.[794] On the contrary, rather than being dismissive of his emotions, Preston acknowledged feeling things deeply, and felt it right to consider the meaning of such thoughts and feelings. The war also presented Preston with reasons to experience heightened contemplation which required negotiation. Thus, Preston's use of the *Diary* to navigate his wartime course accords with sociological findings, as Aho describes of Max Scheler's conclusions on 'emotionality': 'Far from impeding capacity to know the world and adjust effectively to it, [Scheler] argues that feelings are our species' most fundamental means of reality orientation....Moods and emotions are forms of knowing in their own right.'[795]

Thus, in the heightened stimuli of war, the diary can be seen as a means used by Preston to orient himself emotionally, and was an effort which provided a great deal of stability. Even in ventilating his feelings, which would seem an apparent lack of control, he was reacquiring composure personally, and maintaining self-possession in his social life by expressing things in the diary which kept thoughts and feelings from manifesting in less controlled ways. His desire to write of his vexations was enhanced moreover by his recognition that many of his views were contrary to popular opinion, even within Keighley, and were especially contrary to those of the majority of his colleagues' opinions he

heard frequently expressed in the staff room. He was thus prevented to a large degree from engaging in person-to-person like-minded consideration of events and topics. The impermissibility of free expression in his social circumstances is illustrated in the following slip of the tongue made during a staff room discussion. Upon several remarks being made by colleagues of the fitness of the Old Boys of the school who had undergone military training, Preston, in a knee-jerk response said that the boys were simply: 'being fattened up for slaughter.' His horror at having spoken his mind in this way is evident, writing as he did that he could: 'have bit my tongue out after I had said it'.[796]

That he would turn to a very private form of writing as a tool by which to maintain his composure and explore the dimensions of his perceptions, amongst which was consideration of his own limitations and measure of himself as a person, accords with the assertion of Anthony Elliott towards the way in which 'self work' was approached in this period: 'The idea that there is something clandestine in the constitution of identities is especially important to various forms of late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century social thought. It is evident, for example, in Freudian psychoanalysis with its emphasis on the hidden, repressed dimensions of the self'.[797] Hinton too points to this in regard to Mass Observationists during the war, describing their diary writing as akin to a 'a room behind the shop', which could used as a workplace for the self.[798]

The need for orientation work during the war can also be seen as a product not only of his views running contrary to many others, but perhaps more so in regard to the increasing extension of subtle forms of power and control to which his professional and public life subjected him, which agitated him so deeply in part because it stirred a deep feeling of limitation which kept him from feeling more fully self-actualised and autonomous. He was, however, also uncomfortable with the social perception of himself he felt was reflected to him in the diminution of his efforts at KBGS. 'The simple truth is,' describes Oshana: 'that social identity has genuine implications for practical agency. How we are identified creates expectations on the part of others for conduct and accountability, and defines the opportunities we face, the rights we enjoy, and the persons and institutions to whom we must answer.'[799] In this way, he felt his

workplace was increasingly constraining to his sense of self and all the more so as he realised this was something he felt unlikely to break free from—he did not have the social connections to get him a position elsewhere. Thus, just as community can hold positive consequences for one's sense of self, Aho also tells us that community can curb the individual's self development by enfolding, confining, and limiting the individual.[800]

Thus, his chance to advance himself rested, as Preston saw it, on his ability to exercise creative energies to produce a written work, preferably fictional, of such ability that it would either open up a career as a writer, or in the publishing world in another capacity, or would at least serve as evidence of his abilities to others.[801] He wrote regarding this: 'If only I could do some writing and win a feeling of independence over all these pinchcheek Mussolini's by which I am surrounded I could be very much happier.'[802] The desire for creative self-fulfilment and the independence this would afford him, to which the previous passage attests, speaks to an important aspect of modern selfhood addressed in Georg Simmel's 1903 essay 'The Metropolis and Mental Life', wherein Simmel wrote:

> The deepest problems of modern life flow from the attempt of the individual to maintain the independence and individuality of his existence against the sovereign powers of society, against the weight of the historical heritage and the external cultural and technique of life.[803]

It was an element which would have been prevalent in large portions of Preston's reading from an early age as well, in the Romantic notion of: 'the charismatic genius who breaks with both patrimonial tradition and bureaucratic modernity'.[804] Given his engagement with English literature since youth, this recurring theme likely contributed to his own desire to realise such freedom for himself. Within the emergence of selfhood in the twentieth-century, Langhamer also tells us: 'choice, fulfilment, self-discovery and self-realization came to be seen as central to the making of modern "psychological selves".'[805]

For Preston, creative fulfilment and a sense of independence were intimately bound up. In this way he could gain a sense of accomplishment, as well as allow for the possibility for him to move out of a career where he felt little respect. The perception he felt others had of him was all the more frustrating as

he felt a deep sense that he had something within him that was constrained, if only he could access it: 'I sometimes feel that I might have been successful as a writer. I have the power to be moved profoundly by the world around me but somehow there is some impediment somewhere that just will not allow me to make any use of the glimmerings of the power I feel I have.'[806]

Thus, in addition to assisting him in navigating his social world and orienting himself during the war, the *Diary* was an attempt to access what he needed to see about himself and the world around him so as to be able to find his voice as a writer.[807] He conveyed this quite clearly at one point:

> Not much or indeed anything of importance to report or so it would seem. Perhaps if I could see things as I ought to see them I might find much of importance to report—things which now appear insignificant but which measured against different standard are of the profoundest significance. Browning's portrait of Lazarus forever haunts me. He had been across that "bourne" and had come to and how changed was the significance of the world for him.[808]

This conflict within himself over being able to utilise his creative abilities is also particularly well evidenced in the following piece of writing:

> As I was wiping the glasses at lunch time I had a sudden consciousness, as I often have, of the multifarious and marvellous interest of the world, and yet the sad consciousness that I can never capture it....I feel that if only I could find a means of realising these things for myself I should succeed in realising them for other people and that in the realisation I might succeed at last in doing some really creative work that perhaps the world would not willingly let die.[809]

7.10 *Humanity and Inhumanity*

In Preston's inability to write a creative work, or to otherwise secure a means of 'getting on' as he referred to it, he did not hide from looking to himself as a source of obstruction. He looked often to his own weaknesses which he felt largely emanated from his lack of greater education,[810] foreign travel, and what he called his 'diffidence'.[811] He also expressed at one point that he felt that he had been impressed with too much modesty in his youth by his mother, which had lead him to believe he was: 'really not capable of much.'[812] However, he also considered the ways of mankind in relation to his perceptions and where humankind placed importance and he wondered whether the notions and

definitions of success humankind espoused, especially as were emphasized in the ascendancy of the technical-scientific intelligences, were not misguided when considered in light of what he considered true values,[813] and true goodness.[814] In the disjunction he felt taking shape between his views and what he perceived to be many others' views, he wondered if his perception was simply his way of making excuses for his own failings.[815] At one point he was particularly struck with the contemplation of what was truly right—what he believed, or what he felt the majority of society espoused. This came to the fore as he was trying to give a poetry lesson to a Sixth Form class at KBGS whilst military traffic passed by the road just by the school. He wrote:

> I could scarcely hear myself speaking at all and the roar outside was obviously taking the minds of the Lower Sixth off their work....There I was lecturing about why Shelley did not believe that poetry should be specifically and intentionally didactic...and how poetry's concern was with the imagination....and I wondered who was wrong—was I, who was trying to penetrate the consciousness of lads with the law of love and striving to speak of beauty and the imagination when my audience's ears were half-cocked for tanks and planes and their thoughts possibly on a coming offensive, or were they right out there with their tanks and their guns concentrating on the job of killing their country's enemies. Somehow, from one point of view our work seemed so unreal against that martial background. What did all that we were trying to concentrate on matter? Suppose the coming offensive in the West were to fail, would Shelley and his poetical theories matter anymore for any of us? Would imagination and love still have significance? Is there any room for poetry and Shelley and his theories in a world such as the present? Then again, from another point of view, ours seemed the only reality, so I thought this morning. Shelley will go on having a significance of a positive kind when all those noisy machines outside are so many heaps of rusting iron. In the spring sunshine they were incongruous bits of something that had escaped from the pit-dragons of Hades come up for a brief spell. Man would have to seal up that crack through which they had escaped or he would perish.[816]

From this, Preston concluded that the beliefs he espoused represented humanity, and the forces which he saw as having caused the war and which were now justifying the necessity of the war represented inhumanity. These were the forces of consumerism, mass-culture, the equation of science as progress, and the rise of the military-industrial complex as a preeminent force in the nation. In all the conflict he faced over what was truly right and how a person should order their lives, his contemplations always led him back to seeing the situation in these terms: that people were blind to their own

inhumanity, and that it was through the arts, religion, nature, and greater thoughtfulness people could be awakened to and cultivate their humanity, but that these were areas which were ignored in favour of more immediate pleasures and humankind's discontent increasingly emulsified by trivialities which allowed for conflict to arise.

At the beginning of the war, he had felt the humanising forces that were battling against such dehumanising forces would prevail. In his early writing, Preston testified of a belief that the war would bring a change to how people thought about their lives.[817] In mid-1941 he considered the war's effect by contrasting the hope he had for the future with the past: 'It is true we have lost our sense of community and tend to lead lonely isolated lives where home is a place next to the garage and a car and a wireless is all we need. Wonder if the common effort of the war will change us or whether we shall go back to the old selfishness and the old isolation.'[818]

Throughout 1941, 1942, and 1943, he postulated ways the societies of the world would improve consequent of the war. In 1941, he felt that the cooperation the war was bringing about at both the local, national, and international levels would carry on in post-war society.[819] He hopefully anticipated a European Union-like organisation taking shape and believed America would live up to its commitments of the post-war settlement to come unlike it had after WWI.[820] Greater international cooperation also was a theme that ran throughout the early years of the war in regard to his thinking of a future peace. Also in 1941, he felt the war would cause people to realise the importance of the dimension of the religiously spiritual self: 'If only we could be allowed to live in a world which was safe for the spirit—and yet I suppose days such as these should lead to a growth of the spirit—a pressure to face the ultimate.'[821] In 1942, his hope for international cooperation was expressed in terms of what he felt appeared to be a: 'much healthier outlook on the subject of sharing the world's resources out amongst all nations, and it would appear too that there will be a stern retribution for aggressors than there was not last time.'[822] And he wrote often of a general sense that people would try harder to maintain a peace once it was achieved. He wrote of this often in terms of

needing to make use of the ‘virtues’ society possessed, and to continue to work together as well as as individuals.[823]

However, frustrated intonations began to increasingly appear from mid-1943 onward. In June of that year, he wrote that war was a result of: ‘man’s utter incapacity to learn a lesson.’[824] In the course of the war societal conduct and the dominant streams of thought which came to be espoused diminished his hopes that society would apply correctives to the behaviours he felt had led the world to war. He felt what humanising forces existed in society were losing ground to the forces of inhumanity. This was seen in the increased faith in science, as discussed above, but it was also he felt evident in consumerism and the pursuit of base entertainments and materialistic ends, all of which increased his feeling of disjunction with society.

7.11 *Consumerism and Pursuit of Entertainment*

The pursuit of entertainments and the consumerism Preston witnessed as the war drew to an end significantly decreased his hope for the future. He felt that in light of the gravity of the war it was time to realise the need for thoughtful living. Thus the presence and seeming growth of mindless emollients in the form of obnoxious entertainments was dismaying to him. He felt entertainments were increasingly debased and were causing a sort of mass-mindlessness. He wrote of his shock at observing this:

> As I passed house after house...wirelesses were going at full blast all with some sort of variety show being punctuated by loud blasts of raucous laughter. I always have a picture when I hear laughter on the wireless of rows upon rows of open mouths bellowing inanely. It is saddening to hear sometimes what it is that draws forth these howls....There is no wonder that those that rule often appear to have a low opinion of the intelligence of the masses.[825]

Two years later he was less shocked, but still mystified at the popularity of some entertainments: ‘We have listened to one of those ridiculous “Appointment with Fear” programmes. It is really amazing what people will tolerate.’[826] He saw a lowering of intellectual engagement, and lack of reality or engagement with what he saw as compelling aspects of life in many popular entertainments throughout the war. Preston saw this desire for what he perceived to be mindless entertainment also driving cinema attendance during the war. His

opinion is clear in his referral to the cinema as: ‘nit-wit films’. Even theatre was discouraging: ‘Curious what a number of these plays all have exactly same part—These people always speak most precisely and have an irritating sort of common sense about them. They are singularly obtuse. In fact they are a sort of modernized, non-specialised form of Dr Watson.’[827]

He saw the lowering of intellectual engagement as affecting other mediums as well, such as the news. He felt that news was sensationalized, and he was agitated by the ‘knock-about’ way in which he felt descriptions and messages were articulated. By the middle of the war he was thoroughly annoyed: ‘I have been infuriated again to-day by the misuse of the English language….Journalists and bureaucrats are playing the devil with our language….We shall have to start afresh with the language very soon.’[828] The intensity of the conflict only served to increase ‘the mutilation of the English language’ in his estimation. The free-hand taken in the reporting of military affairs was particularly angering, causing him to express at one point: ‘There are some half-baked smart little journalists loose at present’.[829]

Furthermore, the taste in entertainments testified to what Preston felt was a growing adoption of an American mentality towards life. American society was a brilliant facade to him. The way of life popularly espoused was seen as futile in his estimation. He agreed with the representation of American society in Sinclair Lewis’s *Babbitt*, which illustrated that: ‘underneath all the hard glitter and efficiency and hilarity there is shown how unsatisfactory it all is and how lacking in spiritual values.’[830]

Yet, contemporary entertainments appeared to be giving people what they wanted. This spoke to a phenomenon of which Preston was particularly wary, what Raymond Williams termed: ‘a new enlargement of identity, in what he terrifying to Preston and reverberated in his perceptions towards a variety of issues. In a related way, consumerism presented a danger to society in the willing loss of freedom to ‘commercial demagogy’ to use H.G. Wells’s term.[831] Preston felt that people did not think for themselves, but looked to the media, and other sources for ready answers. People, he felt, were looking to be told what to do, how to feel—essentially to inform on their own experience. He despised being directed what to do. He disdained the patronising tone of the

Ministry of Information, and was especially alert to attempts at mass persuasion during the war.

Yet Preston felt mass persuasion went relatively unnoticed by the majority of society as he felt evidenced in the increased consumer-driven behaviours he witnessed as the war drew to an end. Consumerism worried him in that he felt it perpetuated a change wherein rather than seek to be of worth through character, good works, and intentions, people instead attempted to assert their worth through material goods. Preston also saw that consumerism caused people to conceive of security in terms of material ends.[832] The pursuit of raw materials he felt would unsettle human relations on a number of levels. In addition to the human misery caused by the contestation over resources, Preston also felt that the pursuit of entertainments and consumerism were harmful to the natural world. He saw this, for instance, in the approach of visitors to Yorkshire's natural spaces and what he perceived to be the shallowness with which the natural environment was engaged. He saw the resurgence of motoring at the war's end as indicative of the carelessness towards the natural world and the desire of material ends despite the harm caused. He was dismayed to note that many took the return of large numbers of cars on the road in the final months of the war as a 'grand sight'.[833] He anticipated the tremendous demand for oil motoring would cause, likening it to the world's previous dependence on coal.[834]

In addition to being harmful to international relations and the natural world, he also saw the pursuit of material ends and entertainments as psychologically unhealthy to the individual. He wrote at one point: 'We need so many things to make us happy now…and consequently there are hundreds more ways in which we can be disappointed.'[835] Preston's own wartime experiences had impressed the psychological and emotional value of simpler pleasures and greater appreciation for such things as heat, light, and the beauty of nature. He had been surprised at the enjoyment he felt in simple things during the war, such as cycling, taking time to read a book next to a stream, picking berries on the moors, and spending time with his wife discussing matters, and felt if others could discover such enjoyment much discontent would be prevented.[836]

In the popular attitude towards what he felt to be shallow entertainments and material goods, Preston saw the past repeating itself. He wrote near war's end: 'All this thirst for pleasure which was so noticeable before the war is beginning again with redoubled force. I cannot believe it is a good sign for the future of the country.'[837] A more thoughtful life he felt would not inevitably lead to perfection, but would nurture a more conscientious way of living which would have profoundly positive effects on society. Instead, as the lights came on again all around Britain, Preston's hopes grew dimmer that any positive change had occurred in society's attitudes towards entertainments and material consumptions, instead the war had seemed to intensify a new level of worshiping 'things'.[838] Cultivation of greater consciousness seemed to run contrary to what most desired. He wrote late in the war:

> I have wondered recently whether the reason, or one of the reasons, why we have so much interference in our lives now, so much ordering about by government decree is because we are morally worse than our forbearers. Milton always held that government was a sign of our fallen state and that the less we had of it the better. If so we may argue that the great increase in government interference mirrors a further decline in our moral life and there appears to be something in the theory. If no one was selfish there would be no need for any form of rationing. An improvement in moral standards might see the disappearance of much law that is of recent origin.[839]

Later still, he wrote:

> The way people spend money now just leaves me gasping....People do not appear to have any idea of the necessity for self restraint. Apart from whether they can afford £1 for cigarettes. It seems to be there is the greater question of "should I ever allow a self-indulgence to get hold of me to such extent that I must spend so much on myself?' This question never even occurs to people now, of that I am convinced. I am beginning to wonder whether it has any validity. Ought one to deny oneself anything?....But suppose we fall on lean times. Suppose there is not the money in the future. If people cannot indulge their appetites as they have done? What then? Are we becoming so thoroughly selfish that, as before the war, we are incapable of making the great decisions because they involve self-sacrifice, a loss of comforts. I'm afraid sometimes for our country.[840]

This concern also stemmed from what he sensed to be a new confidence within society towards the future. This confidence was not the result of an assurance that society was committed to taking greater responsibility to work together towards cooperative, sustainable living, but rather it was a confidence he felt

stemmed from the assurance many held that the future would necessarily be better than the past. Unfortunately, as Preston saw it, this belief was founded in people's greater trust in planning from above through a combination of scientists and bureaucrats, and a faith that scientific progress would equate with societal progress.

7.12 *Competing Notions of Progress and the Welfare State*

Preston's perception that many desired welfare, not by and though a common effort or concern for one another, but through faith in and espousal of a profusion of technical methods, was deeply disconcerting to him. He felt that people saw that it was preferable to place matters in the hands of a technically-orchestrated, impersonal system that would then supposedly ensure societal progress. It was because of the ways in which scientific achievements during the war were a central focus of the war's progression, Peter Watson concludes that: 'whereas the earlier war had been followed by an era of pessimism, World War II…was followed by the opposite mood, an optimistic belief that science could be harnessed for the benefit of all.'[841] In this way, Angus Calder concluded a generation ago that: 'the public optimism of men of science served to colour the millenarian visions of the war years.'[842]

7.13 *The Infeasibility of Technical-Scientific Cures for Society*

Preston felt the popular imaginations surrounding the welfare state were simply too optimistic and not nearly as feasible as many believed. Scientific modernity was fantasy in his judgement. He greatly accorded with Joad's view, expressed in 1941, that society: 'should clearly understand how illusory is the world as science presents it to us, how vain are purely material ends and how important it is to understand what is meant by values and how we should at all times pursue them, and in so doing know happiness.'[843] As support for state intervention gained strength, Preston tried to conceive of the desire for welfare more positively, positing to himself: 'maybe all this talk of a brave new future is proof that man is naturally inclined to creation rather than destruction.'[844]

Yet, this conception was not able to be maintained; he increasingly perceived that the welfare state was conceived as a sort of 'cure-all' for the nation's problems. He worried about the lack of say people would have in their own lives

and that people would not be able to send their children to school where they wanted. His resistence to welfare increased in parallel to his disdain for technical implementation, he wrote of this in early 1945 in the following way:

> these practical men of business, these men of science, these men of money…[who]…present to the world such a wonderful spectacle of successful compulsion upon the circumstances that surround them. Difficulties that would defeat some men do not so much as stop these men…[through]…their efficiency—their organising power, their influence, ability to pull strings—all the rough ways are made straight.[845]

He saw in the growth of esteem for technical intelligence the cultivation of a society which was baseless and would grow indifferent toward the individual.[846] Raymond Williams's observation of society in *Town and Country* is along the lines of what Preston feared. Williams wrote: 'Yet what we have finally to say is that we live in a world in which the dominant mode of production of social relationships teaches, impresses, offers to make normal and even rigid, modes of detached, separated, external perception and action: modes of using and consuming rather than accepting and enjoying people and things.'[847]

Preston would also have found accord with George Orwell's observation that: 'the bigger the machine of government becomes, the more loose ends and forgotten corners there are in it.'[848] Like Orwell, Preston had deep misgivings of the effectiveness of bureaucracy and the extension of state power. In the early part of war he had reeled at the extension of state powers, and was also often infuriated by the approach taken by local government to implement wartime policies. Throughout the war he perceived an unfairness and dismissal of the individual in the state's implementation of a variety of measures; for instance, he felt he had wrongly been forced into HG participation and that the Citizens' Advice Bureau had wrongly been taken over by the Ministry of Health. These processes and others testified to Preston of the obtuse methodology of the state. A particular observation over wartime controls is especially illustrative of this perception: 'A milkman may not go into the next street to sell milk because of the waste of petrol but a Skipton plumber can come to Keighley to put a bath in. How the bureaucrats must rub their hands.'[849] Thus, whilst Preston accepted the necessity of the enhanced role of the state in the economic and social lives of the citizenry during the war, albeit sometimes begrudgingly, he did not see that in peacetime such controls would be a service to society. His views of what

a continuation of controls would resemble were in line with Prime Minister Churchill's estimation: 'Socialism is, in its essence, an attack not only on British enterprise but on the right of an ordinary man or woman to breathe freely without having a harsh, clumsy, tyrannical hand clapped across their mouth and nostril.'[850]

He felt the conception of the welfare state which was being advanced was also too economically optimistic and espoused fanciful beliefs of the feasibility of state implemented welfare. He had noted regularly the cost of the war throughout and the destruction that was taking place, and felt that even without the cost of welfare programmes the country would struggle for some time to redress the national deficit accrued during the war. He posited whether it would be righted by the time his son had grown to adulthood. Preston's perceptions were also based in part on what he came to know of the local situation during the war. In early 1945 he was concerned by what he felt were the prospects for the future health of Keighley's industry,[851] as well as the nation's.[852] Whilst he questioned what benefit wide-scale state welfare would have for society, he also questioned what the impact would be to the individual.

7.14 *Loss of Individuality*

An important aspect of his concern over the implementation of such policies also emanated from a fear that a technically-orchestrated welfare state would encourage mass society. Middle-class opposition to the welfare state has regularly been argued to be the result of a fear that welfare would, in Morgan and Evan's words: 'undermine the advantages and cultural distinctions that had supported a life of comfort and authority before the war'.[853] Preston did feel some disagreement that those such as himself, who had striven determinedly to earn what they had, would be taxed excessively to provide for those whom he felt to be: 'the feckless and improvident'.[854]

However, his opposition rested, as indicated in the previous section, on an array of concerns much beyond the economic impact he would endure. Although a supporter of the Conservative party, and apparently holding views on welfare philosophically aligned with high Toryism and classical liberalism, he did not see himself amongst or in support of the 'privileged classes' whom he felt had for

many years engaged in a systematic oppression of those in the lower socio-economic classes.[855] Preston did not see that there was a difference in the quality of people according to their birth. His Christian beliefs apparently instilled in him, along with his interest in the insights made by psychology, that humans were essentially the same: all were subject to the natural instincts of man.[856] He was non-deferential to wealth and status, and he disagreed with the view that status was indicative of the true quality of a person.[857] He was dismayed that his views on 'state control' placed him, as he wrote: 'in the company of those we should despise even more', presumably the improvident wealthy whose motivation in opposing state control was not borne out of regard for ethical principles, but their own monetary interests.[858]

It is important also to note that Preston was not opposed to a reduction in his own living standard if it was for a better good, as illustrated in his support of the dismantling of Empire, which he felt assured would directly effect people such as himself. He also was not opposed to taxation or welfare in principle, he saw each as just and necessary measures and actually did not feel that government measures went far enough to protect the elderly poor during the war.[859] He also very willingly accepted a rise in taxes during the war and accepted that there would be a rise in taxes following the war. Thus Preston's opposition to welfare does not appear fundamentally economical as has strongly been asserted as a primary motivation of opposition by the middle-classes to welfare policies, but rather rested strongly on the prospect that welfarism would put in place a bureaucratic apparatus which would be unwieldy, clumsy, and overly powerful.

Furthermore, Preston perceived that in the extension of controls a loss of individuality would follow which would compound the 'eclipse of the individual' he already saw in society.[860] He saw that those in favour of welfarism were opposed to individuality, he wrote in mid-1945 of a discussion between himself and a colleague: 'Curious the attitude that is taken by some people. Rannard seems to have a horror of men of character. He foamed at the mouth, almost, this afternoon when I defended W.G. Grace and accused him with his Left Wing tendencies of wishing to have everyone reduced to a dead level of mediocrity—a neatly standardized population all daily docketed.'[861]

7.15 *Voluntarism*

Preston's opposition to welfare as he perceived was being conceived by many also resulted in his sincere belief in the effectiveness and advantage of community and social involvement underpinned by regard for one's fellow man and society. His charitable involvement was not founded in paternalistic condescension, as voluntarism in this period has largely been attributed, but a belief that society was interconnected and had a duty to serve one another. He felt voluntarism had personal advantages to the individual also,[862] which were in addition to the good effected in the service rendered. He also felt that inter-personal service fostered concern and a sense of community between individuals. Bureaucracy, on the other hand, was without human dimension, it was the most impersonal and obtuse of forces as Preston perceived.[863] He felt it was only through selective self-sacrifice, self-control, and genuine concern for others that real change could be effected. He wrote of this: 'It is still true that you cannot make men good by act of Parliament.'[864] He felt real gladness at his work with Toc H during the war and his attitude stands in contradiction of Nicholas Dakin's and Justin Davis Smith's assertion concerning the attitude of volunteers during wartime that: 'the clear conclusion from the experience in wartime was that the state would necessarily have to play a more substantial role and that victory had demonstrated its capacity to mobilize resources to do so.'[865] Preston never expressed the sentiment that his experience with voluntary action during the war encouraged him to see that state intervention was what was required for a better society. Rather he felt continued voluntary action was the appropriate way forward. Nor would the system which was being supported allow for voluntary effort as Preston saw it. He also believed that welfare would lead to a decline, even the elimination, of voluntary social service.[866]

7.16 *Disdain for the Past*

A significant cause of Preston's disagreement with welfares which contributed to his sense of disjunction with society also stemmed from his perception that those in favour of state intervention simply felt that something *new* would be better, and that society would be better off doing away with 'old ways'. He loathed the attitude behind Ezra Pound's 1934 injunction: 'Make it new'.[867] He perceived that 'new' was equated with 'progress', which subsequently conferred a negative connotation to everything in and of 'the past'. His discouragement at this line of thought is clear:

> heard someone say “we ought to look to the future.” Now-a-days we do nothing else. I wonder if there has ever been a time where the past was so scorned....Nothing we have must stay as it is—sweep the whole damned lot away—make an end of it—it cannot be good if it is more than a few hours old. I expect that is partly what is the matter with Christianity—it has been preached for 2,000 years.[868]

Preston’s perception of a sense of rupture with the past is echoed by a number of historians. Rieger and Daunton write for instance: ‘The sense of the instability of modern times hinged on conceptualizations of change, with those who emphasized the creative and positive dimensions of innovation being equally conscious of its destructive aspects. In order to create the new, the old or traditional had to be displaced or destroyed.’[869] Rieger, in a separate essay, goes on to assert that: ‘One of the most striking features of historical narratives of the “modern” is the profound sense of rupture that informs them.’ Rieger also quotes Reinhart Koselleck in stating that: ‘expectations of what lay ahead “distanced themselves ever more from all previous experience”.’ Yet, Rieger also cautions: ‘the dominance of such approaches among historians also risks obscuring alternative notions of modernity that did *not* primarily hinge on ideas of disruption.’[870]

Preston both attests and contests the notion of a sense of rupture. He attests to it in that he felt a sense of rupture in the rejection of the past espoused in the ascension of scientific and technical expertise and the way this coalesced in support of a technically orchestrated welfare system. Yet, he contests it in that he did not himself desire a break from the past and this was actually part of his reasoning for not taking a more favourable view of welfare. He did not disdain or dismiss the past. Indeed, he saw himself as part of what was being cast away even though he claimed modernity for himself through achievement of civility which was indicative of humankind’s true progression over time. Furthermore, Preston can be seen to have felt some significant connection with the past or aspects of it, such as the nation’s literary and religious history.

7.17 *Welfare and Soviet Russia*

Preston also felt disjunction with society over welfare as a result of his perception that a growth of affection had mistakenly taken shape during the war amongst Britons for Soviet Russia. He saw popular support for welfare

somewhat as a result of its relation to Soviet Russia's socialistic policies and the adoption of 'foreign ideals' by many in Britain. Preston was perplexed by the affection he perceived for Russia locally and in the country and likened it to a fashion rather than genuine agreement. Nevertheless he did see as Rose asserts that: 'pro-Russian enthusiasm [fed] into discussion about the "new Britain" that would emerge in the post-war world'.[871] He took it as an ominous sign when greeted as 'comrade' on the day which Labour's landside victory was announced.[872]

7.18 *Transition from a Market to a Moral Economy*

Rather than a transition to increased bureaucracy, Preston had hoped during the war that society would transition from a market to a moral economy. This related directly as he saw it to a rejection of the prioritising of material comforts over the common good. He felt that the perceived need popularly held during the war for government implemented welfare was a direct result of the development up until then of a market economy, a transition which Brodie Waddell locates as developing from the Stuart period onward.[873] Preston held that religious and communal ideas should play an active role in the way society was conducted and governmental policy directed. He felt strong accord with a Postscript delivered by MP Will Lawson in February 1944: 'He made a fine plea for a return to recognition of the sanctity of human life and its paramount claims over art and over industry. His talk made Archbishop Lord Lang's speech in the Lords the other day seem very watery.'[874] Preston felt what extension of controls that were to be implemented should be towards regulating business so as to create a just and fair market place. It was the idea of fairness which came closest to convincing Preston of the rightness of welfare. In late 1944 his view towards welfare was tempered consequent of the introduction of a new perception of welfare:

> I have been reading an article in "The Listener" to-night on religion and curiously enough I saw for the first time something I do not remember to have perceived before. Sacrifice of liberty (e.g. in the economic order) may lead to a truer and fuller liberty in other directions. A wage-earner may be economically cribbed, cabined and confined because of unrestricted capitalist-manipulation. I suppose those who are in favour of more and more state interference have this other form of servitude which results from unrestricted competition ever in the forefront of their minds. The churches are coming to support interference which will stop

> exploitation….I shall have to learn to choke down my hatred of state interference in the interest of a greater good.[875]

However, deep misgivings were rekindled over state control of education. Preston seemed convinced new policies would include government direction of where people could send their children to school, and in time he came to again deeply mistrust the extension of government control and the loss of individuality he felt would result.

We see then that Preston did not attribute support for the welfare state to greater public concern, but in the adoption of 'soft' scientific values and the displacement of individual accountability. Thus, the nexus of social change was as he perceived it the result of a change in societal valuation which saw the rise of esteem for technical-scientific intelligences, priorities, and methods which disseminated into a wide variety of issues, even those seemingly unconnected. These included the growth of support for welfarism, the creation a consumer society, a less religious society, and, as will be discussed in the following section, the enabling of the military-industrial complex.

7.19 *VE and VJ Day and the Enablement of the Military-Industrial Complex*

By late 1944, Preston's sense of disjunction with the trajectory of society was unmistakable. His foreboding of what the future would hold is clear in his agreement with the German philosopher and physician Albert Schweitzer:

> Schweitzer feels that our position is critical—he is scathing. Civilization is in grave danger....Men do not think deeply: we are mere camp-followers, Epigoni to a great age. We deceive ourselves, mistaking mastery of externals for true spiritual inwardness: our philosophy is mere journalism. The inexorable strain of modern life leaves a man no time self-collectedness and so he seeks diversion rather than instruction. Cruelty is again practiced; liberty is lost: superstition comes to life again. Our time is so organised that men are not spiritually free: the state, by no means to advantage, replaces individual effort; during war propaganda murders truth. The civilized states are really barbarian; much of our culture is a dress shirt. Men are shallow.[876]

The final months of the war brought a greater sense of deflation. In December 1944 he wrote: 'One of the churches, 1500 years old has been destroyed for ever. What the ancient barbarians left the modern ones have destroyed.'[877] The greater destructive tendency, as he saw evidenced in the development and use

of greater destructive capabilities through rocket technology[878] left him aghast at the possibility and willingness of human beings to inflict destruction on one another.

In early 1945, he wrote of his own perception of his disjunction with society: 'I seem to live in an uncomfortable age for my own ease of mind—an age when the arts are being even more disregarded or even prostituted and when religion has just ceased to be relevant.'[879]

With the announcement of VE Day, he realised that his hopes surrounding societal change would be almost completely unrealised. He did not rejoice in what the future would hold, or in the greatness of the British people. He wrote instead of feeling: 'a profound thankfulness for all God's mercies but not less anxious about the future than I have been about the past.' He admitted to feeling at a loss of how to react to the occasion, his joy tempered by his foreboding of the future. He found some steadiness in vowing to do all that he could in his: 'small way to work for the peace that is to be so as to express my gratitude for the deliverance which has been given to us.'[880]

The discord he felt with society weighed heavily upon him:

> In those dark days of 1940 it seemed as though God had abandoned his world, as though there were no principle of right or justice that must necessarily prevail, but only brute force, the laws of the jungle. There were plenty to cry out then, There is no God. Now they have been saved and there is a chance for decency and honesty and love and truth to prevail, will those same people turn again to God, just as sure now of His existence when He has so obviously shown it, as they were certain of His non-existence when the everlasting night of complete Nazi domination of the world appeared imminent? I expect it is too much to hope of men in the mass but there will doubtless be some who will be impressed by the march of unalterable law.[881]

Rather than attempt to orient himself in the months to come, he seems instead to have a sense that he was watching the world go by. Despite his disagreement with the victory of Labour in the elections in July, his response could not have been more placid: 'There is always a tendency to wish to try something new on the part of a lot of people.'[882] He was equally dispassionate in his contemplations on the situation:

> At 6 p.m. to-night a socialist government was certain. I wonder what is the reason. Is this the reward for Munich? I refuse to believe that only politicians were to blame for that. Is this because of memories of unemployment after the last war? The Conservatives were not to blame for that. Is it because there are so many young folk voting?...Most of Toc H very pleased with election results. There seems to be a certain amount of animosity against Churchill personally.[883]

Yet what disjunction Preston had felt previously was entirely eclipsed with the dropping of the atomic bombs. He was shocked into reaction. He wrote, his head spinning at the implications of the bomb: 'barbarism is back again.'[884] His response was not so much to try to orient himself, but rather to brace himself for what appeared to him to have been reified by war's end—that humankind was blind to in its own inhumanity. Humankind he felt would go on suiting itself, deeper sources of problems would go unsought, opportunities would be lost, emollients and falsehoods would be sought after, and inhumane pathways gloried in. Whilst Preston believed that science held legitimate knowledge, he believed it could only offer an incomplete knowledge of the world. The faith that he felt was espoused in it amongst those in society left him shocked. Of the development and use of atomic weaponry he wrote:

> It has cost, apparently £500,000,000 to produce. The world becomes madder and madder. What a gala scientists are having now. Fancy all that money being put at the disposal of poets, dramatists, novelists, musicians, sculpture for the benefit of the human race!! It is impossible to conceive of such a thing happening.

The madness of humankind seemed irreconcilable to him:

> The world is here and now desperately striving to discover a means whereby it can stave off famine in Europe and find some means of alleviating the widespread suffering that the modern means of waging war has brought about and here is news of something that in the future is calculated to bring about a state of affairs that no human ingenuity will ever be able to straighten out. We ought all to be locked up in a madhouse. Surely the peoples of the world will rise up and protest.[885]

The dropping of the atomic bombs cemented his suspicion of the pre-eminence given to scientists within society and of the privileged place science would henceforth hold, and the danger therein:

> We have no say in the matter as to whether these men, presumably skilled in one specialised direction only, not particularly or possibly not at all religious, not philosophers, poets, or men of imagination, we, the rest

> of humanity are not to be allowed to say whether they may go on doing what is bound to effect us all vitally, and may even end us all.[886]

In the future, Preston believed society would be guided and that issues would be determined by the scientific and military communities as a result of the ways in which societal faith in science and the military-industrial complex had been greatly amplified by the war. This is in line with the conclusions of several recent studies of the war and post-war period, namely those of David Edgerton, Alan Milward, and Mike Savage. Savage states he took his: 'cue from Edgerton', in coming to see:

> that we need to understand social change in twentieth-century Britain not through the lens of the supposed rise (and then fall) of the welfare state, but in terms of the obduracy and persistence of the "military-industrial complex"….Edgerton rightly insists that it is the military imperative which has been fundamental to twentieth-century British history….Rather than a fundamental concern with welfare, I want to argue the social sciences were shaped by a managerial concern, strongly indebted to cultures of war, monilization and demobilization. This argument runs parallel to Nikolas Rose's emphasis on the way that the post-war social sciences became critically involved in new projects of "governmentality" that sought to "rule through freedom".[887]

For his part, Edgerton gives considerable credit to Alan Milward in questioning the centrality of the welfare state to historical understanding. Edgerton argues for acknowledgement of the 'powerful and under-appreciated point' made by Milward 'a generation ago that his fellow historians of wartime Britain exaggerated domestic social change and downplayed economic change, especially its international aspects'.[888] In his work *Britain's War Machine*, Edgerton elucidates the valuation of science amongst government leaders, especially Prime Minister Churchill, during the war.[889]

Similarly in line with Preston's views is Edgerton's argument that despite the necessity of the Second World War, it does not: 'prevent it being a terrible disaster for humankind, and even being on the right side did not mean it was good for those who waged it.'[890] In opposition to such a view of the war is that of Ian Morris's *War! What is it good for?: Conflict and the Progress of Civilization from Primates to Robots*, which argues the advantages of war, including the Second World War, upon the societies engaged in them and for humankind generally.[891] Others have also claimed specific results were gained from the

Second World War. Brendan Evan has asserted that whilst it remains questionable whether: ‘a general thesis linking war to progressive reform can be sustained…. it is evident that in twentieth-century Britain, war produced major educational reforms….that the reform of 1944 was a direct consequence of war’.[892] There are other arguments that could be made of the advantageous consequences of war, the urgency war gave the development of penicillin for instance, but Preston perceived that for himself and society more generally the Second World War had offered nothing of positive effect, and if any good had come, it was far outweighed by the negative consequences society faced.

7.20 *Disjunction and Self-care*

Preston had hoped that through the ordeal of war society would develop a collective conscience of the need for greater consideration of its ways of life, international cooperation, and that greater individual responsibility would be assumed in regard to social issues. He felt this would consequently lead people to more thoughtful ways of living, a re-evaluation of what should have value in life, and would subsequently contribute to a greater collective wellbeing. He felt repeatedly rebuked in this line of thinking throughout the war. He perceived this strongly in the denial of the worth of his own thoughtfully considered engagement with the war effort during his tribunal with the Ministry of Labour as to whether he should be exempt from HG duty, but he saw it in many other ways as well.

At the end of the war Preston believed that perhaps a few would have been impressed by the need to treat humankind’s natural tendencies and base motivations,[893] and thereby lead more conscientious and contented lives. But these would not be majority. He seems to have felt he and like-minded others were instead akin to a nearly extinct species of still caring people. His agreement with W. Macneile Dixon’s *The Human Situation*, is reflective of this: ‘On every side to-day you meet with an exaltation of the intellect at the expense of the spirit. The meaning, weighing, calculating faculty of the human creative is enthroned, whilst man’s remaining attributes are irrelevant.’[894]

Although it could be argued Preston’s fundamental sense of disjunction could be seen to be with a world that no longer recognized, let alone gave

consideration to religion, it must be acknowleged thatdespite being a devout Christian Preston was still concerned with living in a mortal world as effectively as he could. He considered things in an temporal sense. Whether the resources of the world were gifts from a divine being or not, they were recognized as things which were not endless and humankind's interaction with them had, and would continue to have, profound consequences in a variety of ways. Similarly, human beings, whether divine creations or the result of millions of years of evolution, were, Preston felt, worthy of being treated above the level of 'cannon fodder'. It was in the difference in approaching and interacting with the world's resources and with other human beings Preston felt fundamental disjunction with society, rather than simply a variance in religious belief.

He saw the way people delighted to drive on the road once again as petrol rationing was lifted, perhaps in part because of his own predilection for cycling, as indicative of the absence of thought with which life was being pursued, the growing proclivity to not take notice of things around one or even to take time to give one the opportunity to notice. Motoring and many other aspects of modern living were causing a reduction of original thinking, people were increasingly turning to fad ideas and shallow entertainments in order to not have to think for themselves and to not have to deal with the reality of situations. People took no or little time for inner lives which Preston increasingly saw as of importance during the war to both the individual and to social wellbeing. He also saw consumerism as a particularly ominous sign. He saw in societal conduct inconsideration of the natural, as well as the possibilities it offered for peace, tranquillity, and simpler, sustainable pleasures, but also inconsideration of how people could more peaceably interact through a more careful consideration of the world's resources. He did not see that this was even being engaged with by the majority, let alone a priority as he felt it should be given the circumstances.

Humankind he feared was impervious to resisting finding fulfilling meaning both as individuals and societies in mindless emollients and hopes of cure-alls that required no individual effort on their part. The fight over resources would be amplified by the strength of the military-industrial complex taking shape in society thanks to society's regard for science as a means to solve problems.

In the final days of the war, and in the immediate time after victory in the Pacific, Preston saw society's ways as becoming frenzied with the return to 'normal' life, and the self-congratulatory, confident mood he perceived. His sense of disjunction from what he perceived to be humankind's nonsensical approach to life is evident in his description of celebrations around VJ Day:

> To-day and to-morrow have been proclaimed as public holidays. To-day, this morning, I have worked upon "Point-counter-Point" and I shall go on with this W.E.A. work this afternoon—I might as well. It has rained practically every bit of the afternoon so I have worked in my room and when I tired of working on the novel I went through the old "Listerners" for press-cuttings, and I have gone through the whole box for matter likely to be useful for my lectures. I have made out a tentative list of lectures up to fourteen, so I have another ten to find somewhere. This I have been doing whilst the rest of the world appears to have been celebrating. People have been dancing and singing "There'll always be an England", and pulling things down and burning them. Fire brigades have been working hard in many places.[895]

Preston continued to seek peace, through understanding, but also somewhat for itself. He seemed to accept that quiet living was not something of which to be ashamed. In the time off from work granted upon victory in Europe he wrote that: 'This afternoon we went out on our bikes up Paikes Hill and outspanned in a field a the top of the hill where I went to sleep in the hot sunshine lulled by the enthusiastic song of skylarks.'[896] He also noted sitting out in his garden to read in the sunshine as though he almost felt he had engaged in a taboo. In general, he noted: 'I have become accustomed to enjoying myself very quietly now-a-days.'[897]

It is notable that this was increasingly done in the company of his family. He made an effort to spend more one-on-one time with his son, which was also somewhat attributable to encouragement from his wife. In the last week of the war, he and his son travelled by cycle together to Harrogate for a carnival and then to Knaresborough where they went rowing on the River Nidd. They enjoyed the day, and Preston expressed a desire to return to take his wife in the near future.[898]

Yet, for all his sense of disjunction—of being different from others—this turn towards the private accords with a number of conclusions by historians that war's end saw many people incline towards private life, so much as to be

recognised as a general shift in emotional orientation of society.[899] Rose rejects attributing this shift to Hinton's 'apathy school' argument, and instead attributes the increased primacy of the private to a fear of unfulfilled desire.[900] A related consideration is Langhamer's assertion that greater investment was made in relationships in post-war Britain.[901] In a recent work, Hinton distinguishes private life as an attempt to 'outflank the operations of centralized power'.[902]

Despite his sense of disjunction, Preston did not disengage or become a recluse. He did look more to family life and his private time as sources of secure selfhood and enjoyment, but he continued his engagement with society along the lines he had established prior to the war within, to take Hinton's phrase: 'the interstices of organized society'.[903] He directed his energies where he felt most good, towards the inner-self, and therein in promotion of the arts, religion, and recognition of the goodness of the natural world. His perception of his efforts did alter however. His understanding of community involvement had been shaped during an early life within a community which emphasized the Victorian culture of individual duty through moral conduct and public respectability. Similarly, he had believed that dedication to his work would allow him to advance by his merit. By the end of the war, Preston can be seen to be somewhat disillusioned with this, he no longer saw this system as having any relevance—sincerity and integrity were no longer means to secure status in society because society no longer recognized these as attributes for which to strive. Service and engagement in good causes he felt no longer improved you in others' eyes, or earned you a sense of respectability. He came to see that engagement in society had to be from the individual's own conviction that considerate service and engagement in worthwhile work was right and good, even if it was not socially recognized as such, and coud in fact in some cases cause one to face social rebuke as he had sharply felt at his Ministry of Labour tribunal.

He came also to see the good in the notion of care of the self. This did not equate to narcissism, but rather in taking care of the self he was finding a way to negotiate the public world with which he felt disjunction whilst still upholding his beliefs and maintaining his sense of self amidst the tensions and disappointments of public and professional life. The need he felt to set his own course in this way is perhaps why he continued to write in the *Diary* which was

only supposed to last the duration of the war. Embarking towards an uncertain and disquieting future was mitigated through finding the words to give form and shape to incoherence, and to locate the invisible forces shaping his world.

CHAPTER 8 Conclusions

In the opening lines of James Hinton's *Nine Wartime Lives*, which probes the subjective experience of the Second World War by nine Mass Observation diarists, Hinton clearly asserts the work as: 'an experiment in historiography.'[904] Although edited wartime diaries of 'ordinary' British people have been published in significant numbers in recent years, the feelings, perceptions, and actions recorded have not been explored in relation to the broader social, cultural, and political phenomenon, as Hinton's work and this study attempt. The experiences told of in edited diaries are indeed interesting—even the every-day of wartime life brought with it the feeling of being witness to momentous times. Yet, beyond being interesting, what significance does a single voice have in a war that effected hundreds of millions of lives? Cannot it be surmised that, in the main, those involved experienced discomfort, heartache, grief, concern, and, at times, gladness and jubilation to varing degrees throughout the conflict? What does the common individual—their personal frustrations, feelings of isolation or of community, their sources of solace—matter beyond human curiosity, whether they lived at a time of epic events or otherwise? Why does any connection need to be made between the individual and the wider circumstance?

This study joins a relatively small number of other works which assert the value of examination of the lived experience and takes hold of the opportunity to explore a largely unexplored dimension of the home front—the impact upon the self. This study has taken an unusual approach to exploring how the war interacted on a personal level with a person's self and social conceptions. Asking how the individual understood their own experience, why their perceptions took one path rather than another, what shaped their convictions, and prompted action sheds light onto areas of the past obscured or missed altogether by other methods and other lenses taken towards examination of the past. Like the works of James Hinton and Penny Summerfield, this study has sought to offer insight into the personal impact of the Second World War, a conflict which will forever be remembered as the People's War. It specifically asked how the conflict affected the way northern diarist Kenneth Preston perceived himself and his environs during the war, and what consequence this had on his interaction with the conflict?

The subjective experience, as Hinton indicates, is an experimental way of examining the past. Subjectivity, let alone the subjective experience of selfhood, is not easily read through explicit behaviour or cultural products, and selfhood is not directly relatable or immediately comprehendible. Moreover, as Max Hastings tells us: 'only a small minority [of people] have the emotional energy for reflection'.[905] Even amongst diarists then, few 'go on' long enough or have the reflective energy to allow for exploration of the self and its negotiations. In the case of Kenneth Preston, I was met with a subject who was not only highly observant of and interested in the world around him, he was also interested in his own subjective response. Like Samuel Pepys some three centuries before him, he: 'looked at himself with as much curiosity as he looked at the exterior world'.[906] He made no pretence of having a perfect knowledge of things, and often explored a concern extensively only to question his own conclusions. Conversely, when he felt a certainty towards something he would defend it with vigour. In his daily diary writing, he elucidated his experience of the world he lived in, exposing the emotional journey of the war, and therein revealed the war's impact on a deeper level than endurance of the blackout and altered daily routines. Instead, he showed how pervasive was the war's impact to the thinking of ordinary Britons. Whilst it has often been concluded that people's lives became almost fully oriented towards the war effort, in the process of this study it was discovered that it also altered the way people thought towards a number of aspects of the social, political, and professional life of the nation, as well as towards their own personal spaces—their families, their leisure time, and even their own self conceptions.

Although only a single voice, an individual diarist gives presence to the implications of wider events and phenomena upon a life, part of which is the illumination as perhaps no other source can offer of how abstractions and ideas circulating publicly were personally understood, appropriated, and felt. Thus the examination of selfhood is as rewarding as it is difficult. The study of selfhood in a specific context allows the historian to explore the complexities of human behaviour, as well as the inner-drives and meaning-making of historical peoples.[907] Whilst history has its great men and women, it also has a great many more ordinary people whose reactions to and interactions with the times they lived are increasingly evident as critical dimensions of twentieth-century

history. Selfhood gives coherence to seemingly unknowable and unrelated aspects of past lives. In this way we see that the ordinary individual is essential to understanding the past, and selfhood is essential to understanding the individual. Without understandings of the selfhood experienced by past people, springs of action can only be guessed at and surmised upon, and our own emotional reactions supplanted for those of past actors, which necessarily draws misconnections and misconstrues past times.

Considering the individual experience of a historical actor of wartime Britain is especially important in light of the way in which conclusions of the conflict have widely been based on perceived emotional reactions. An innumerable number of arguments have been made by historians correlating the emotional reactions of the people with social change, almost all of which conclude that a culmination in feeling during the war led to the creation of a more concerned society which ameliorated class tensions and gave rise to popular support for the welfare state. Whilst such arguments were initially presented by historians not long removed from the war and the congratulatory mood that surrounded it, wartime cultural products have re-emerged as a supposed window into wartime discourse to reassert this thesis. Although the resulting image is one wherein the home front was more contested than initially understood (it has been argued, for instance, that gender antagonisms remained and in some ways were strengthened, that there was a heightened sense of the 'other' surrounding social nonconformists and those of non-English ethnic backgrounds, such as Anglo-Italians[908]), the centrality of social unity and positive social change in the collective view of the war holds firm. The war remains a fable of disaster followed by triumph; the people were fighting for more than the: 'likes of Lord Halifax', as Simon Schama put it—they were fighting for one another and that fight culminated in the real victory of universal welfare.[909]

Yet looking directly to the private wartime writings of Keighley school master Kenneth Preston, cultural products, reworked memories, and the onset of nostalgia were bypassed to discover the remarkable extent to which the individual could sift and in some cases reject altogether wartime discourse and instead look to a broader range of sources which informed and served as reference points for him to interpret his wartime experiences. Preston's

experience, as conveyed through his exceptionally thoughtful and consistent diary writing, was examined not to recreate history, but to explore his perception of the conflict as it was occurring and how he felt personally impacted throughout the duration. The impact upon this one man's life bears importantly on the literature of the war. The findings which examination of the Preston *Diary* suggest are in line with recent assertions by David Edgerton and Mike Savage that British social change was a consequence of the increasing role of technology and science, and the reshaping of identities around a new intelligence concerned with technical and scientific expertise. Whilst Vera Lynn's songs and Churchill's speeches are widely remembered, Preston reminds us of the way the war could impact the individual—the incursion of bureaucracy into private life, the heightened emphasis on efficiency, cooperation, and of official and unofficial disapproval of dissent, and the uncertainty over the shape of post war society and politics. He shows us also that the negotiation of the war included such things as questioning what serving the war effort meant—was it to be strictly in accordance with the state's recommendations and republican notions of good citizenship, or were there other interpretations of how to serve the needs of the war effort and wartime populace which motivated active service on the home front? His negotiation was also observed in the way he saw Britain's need to transform from a nation of Empire and instead focus on international cooperation and how the individual should prioritise their daily lives. We see that one of the most personal ways in which the war impacted Preston was in the way he felt his efforts and his beliefs marginalised by being forcibly directed into civil defence activities despite his best efforts to serve his fellow humankind as a volunteer, active community member, and school master. He felt the war's impact also to notions of masculinity and gentility, and affirmed to himself the rightness of quiet, rather than overt, strength. The impact of war can also be seen in his perception of the societal reshaping of notions of truth, beauty and basic human goodness and the growing strength of instrumentality, efficiency, and practicality.

Throughout the conflict, he worked to resolve and reconcile the issues the war raised and the implications he saw in society. In understanding the unseen forces at work through reading, listening, and observing the world around him, he felt a degree of steadiness, but he also increasingly felt the need to escape

to places of solace which he found in the natural world, the private life of his family, and in diary writing. In these places he could contemplate the world at a safe distance and break 'free from the sway of worldly things'.[910] Yet, therein lay a paradox as well—in seeking space in this way he desired greater autonomy as an essential function of his selfhood, but he continued to hold that women's independence and autonomy should be restricted, giving little consideration of the other sex's need for self development and expression.

Despite his hopes for a more thoughtful, simpler way of life to emerge as a corrective to the propensity for war exhibited throughout the first half of the twentieth century, by the war's end he felt those with similar views were greatly in the minority. He perceived rather the emergence amongst a large portion of society a tendency to look instead to emollients in the form of base entertainments and material pursuits. Many he felt had also been convinced by the validation the war seemed to offer to scientific and technical expertise and had consequently adopted an almost blind faith in scientific innovation and a technocratic bureaucracy as the means by which society would and should progress. He saw this new faith in scientific and in technical methods as replacing the old faith of religious belief and artistic exploration of the human condition. He saw trust in science and technical instrumentality as leading many to dismiss the past and imagine anew their worlds in terms of the dream of a New Jerusalem. Yet Preston felt no New Jerusalem would ever be realised—it was simply a desire for the new that beguiled people, there was no renewed conviction in thoughtful living or increased concern and respect for basic human dignity.[911] He felt scientific innovation without parallel intellectual appreciation for such innovations would be to society's detriment.[912]

However, although he held a more positive perception of the past and the conventions that it espoused than he felt did many around him, even he could not remain wedded to old ways; societal change forced Preston to reimagine the future along much different lines than he had only a few years previously. As concerned him most personally, he came to look less to social and professional praise for affirmation and self-validation—what was deemed socially and professionally praiseworthy had changed, it was no longer men of character who were held in esteem, but those who espoused an ethos of efficiency, self-promotion, and success.[913] He saw the workplace transformed

into a system of ruthless administrators and fawning subordinates. For his part, he looked to approval and nourishment in and through his private world—nature, literature, the company of his wife and child, and faith in the doctrine of Jesus Christ espousing gentleness and kindness towards one's fellow beings. He also increasingly recognised an enlargement of his inner life as a good thing.[914]

Despite feeling greatly in the minority near war's end, it did not take long for many of Preston's apprehensions to find echoes in wider society. George Orwell's dystopian novel, *1984*, published just four years after the conflict, portrayed the new technocratic doublespeak and managerialist concern of professional and political life as harbingers of mass inhumanity. The same year, E.M. Forster would, as a public commentator rather than a novelist, discuss the public value of the arts as 'the one orderly product which our muddling race has produced.'[915] In 1957, the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament was organised, advocating unilateral nuclear disarmament by the United Kingdom. Taking a different view, C.P. Snow's 1959 Rede Lecture, 'The Two Cultures', condemned the British education system as having for too long favoured the humanities despite the value of the sciences showcased by the war.[916] Today, the situation has largely reversed, with many arts educators deploring both the prioritization of the sciences in education, as well as the 'technocratic tyranny' of administers.[917] There are also claims of an 'exaggerated faith in specialist expertise' in modern policy making, according to John Tosh, and comparmentalisation of the 'human experience into boxes marked "economics", "social policy" and so on…whereas what is really required is an openness to the way in which human experience constantly breaks out of these categories', as the late E.J. Hobsbawm articulated.[918]

In contrast, Preston's perception of the Second World War as a failure of humankind was and remains less widely recognized. Generations since have maintained the war was for Britain, 'The Good War'[919] and have given the conflict the most positive of connotations in relation to Britain's role in it. Politicians readily use the conflict as a means to define and promote their notion of citizenship and an idealised version of British society.[920] Despite the privileged place of the war in British memory, for Preston, the Second World War was nothing less than the accumulation of human failure, from beginning to

end. In his estimation, opportunities to realise anew the revelations of modern psychology and question the rationality of human conduct, to recognize the good in non-material pursuits and pleasures, and to appreciate the necessity of more cooperative and sustainable living were hardly noted by society at large. The development, use, and positive public reaction to atomic weaponry convinced him that the shape of things to come would be: 'to pile up weapons of destruction to convince brigandage that brigandage doesn't pay'.[921] The casting of the war as a heroic national saga he saw as something awful. Without recognition of war as a form of madness he felt the conflict would be used as a vehicle for national self deception, and the destructive tendencies of human kind would likely manifest in forms worse than the conflict just endured—'man's inhumanity to man' would continue.[922] It was only in the private world—familial life, the interstices of society, the arts, nature, his diary writing, and the cultivation of kindness to keep men's emotions soft and gentle—he felt any hope of humanity, his, or any one else's, being saved.

That his private life would serve as a well-spring of peace, contentment, and inspiration for the remainder of his life is perhaps why the *Diary* which was only to last the duration of the war was continued for at least another 41 years.[923] He remained similarly true in his commitments to family, literature, theatre, religious life, and community involvement. Family cycle rides became an abiding aspect of Preston'd family life, and he only gave up cycling late in his 80s. By the time his advancing age forced him and Kathleen to move from their Utley home to Herncliffe Care Home in Keighley, he had accumulated over 6,000 volumes. Seemingly having thoroughly familiarized himself with English literature, he moved on to French literature in his latter years, reading at least two hours a day in French despite failing eyesight. He remained an active worshipper at St Mark's, Utley throughout his life, helping to found and later participating in the Dramatics Society (St Mark's Players) for 27 years.[924] After the war, he became an instructor with the Workers' Educational Association[925] in addition to his teaching at KBGS. After retiring from full-time teaching, he taught part-time at Keighley Girls' Grammar School.[926] During his service with Toc H, the organization continued its efforts after the war and expanded its services, including organising a hospitals entertainments committee and providing a telephone trolley for the Victoria Hospital for use by the patients.[927] It was with

local pride that the *Keighley News* reported in 1977 of the group's 50th anniversary in Keighley. Although Preston was mentioned in the article, no indication was made that it was he who as an idealistic youth had seen to the establishment of the association in the town, hoping that a few people's efforts would ripple across a community and a nation for the better.[928]

Notes

[1] The Preston *Diary* is housed at West Yorkshire Archive Service, Bradford, 6D87/6.

[2] Preston *Diary*, 7 May 1945.

[3] Kim Atkins, *Narrative Identity and Moral Identity: A Practical Perspective* (Milton Park: Routledge, 2008), 1.

[4] See, Jörn Weingärtner, *The Arts as a Weapon of War: Britain and the Shaping of National Morale in World War II* (London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd., 2005); ed. Richard Slocombe, *British Posters of the Second World War* (London: Imperial War Museum, 2010).

[5] George Orwell, 'The Prevention of Literature', 59-71, in eds. Sonia Orwell and Ian Anugs, *In Front of Your Nose 1945–1950, The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell, Vol. 4* (San Diego: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1968).

[6] Asa Briggs, *Go To It! Working for Victory on the Home Front, 1939-1945* (London: Mitchell Beazley, 2000).

[7] See, for instance, Angus Calder, *The People's War: Britain 1939-1945* (Reprinted London: Pimlico, 1992), 357; Dorothy Sheridan, *Wartime Women: A Mass-Observation Anthology* (London: William Heinemann Ltd, 1990), 1.

[8] David Edgerton, *Britain's War Machine: Weapons, Resources, and Experts in the Second World War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), xvi.

[9] See, for example, Hinton, *Nine Wartime Lives.*

[10] See, Marina Oshana, *The Importance of How We See Ourselves: Self-Identity and Responsible Agency* (New York: Lexington Books, 2010), 2.

[11] Atkins, *Narrative Identity and Moral Identity,* 1.

[12] John Tosh, *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-class Home in Victorian England* (London: Yale University Press, 1999), 199.

[13] Preston's involvement in Toc H is discussed more fully in Chapters 4 and 5; for general information on Toc H, see http://www.toch-uk.org.uk/History.html.

[14] For discussion of the role grammar schools and universities played in encouraging boys and young men towards service in the Empire, see, Tosh, *Man's Place*, 176; as Preston was a former member of the Scouting organisation, the following are also relevant in relation to the point: Michael Rosenthal, *The Character Factory: Baden-Powell and the Origins of the Boy Scout Movement* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers Ltd., 1984); John Springhall, *Youth, Empire and Society: British Youth Movements, 1883-1940* (London: Croom Helm, 1977).

[15] James Hinton, *Nine Wartime Lives: Mass-Observation and the Making of the Modern Self* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 19.

[16] Hinton, *Nine Wartime Lives*, 19.

[17] Eric R. Kandel, *The Age of Insight: The Quest to Understand the Unconscious in Art, Mind, and Brain, from Vienna 1900 to the Present* (New York: Random House, 2012), 14-15.

[18] *Ibid.,* 15; see, for example, Preston *Diary*, 26 February 1944.

[19] See, for example, Preston *Diary*, 22 April 1942; 2 July 1942; 15 July 1945; 5 August 1945.

[20] *Ibid.*, 7 May 1945.

[21] See, ed. Sheridan, *Wartime Women.*

[22] See, for example, ed. Peter Howlett and the Central Statistical Office, *Fighting with Figures*: *Statistical Digest of the Second World War* (London: Stationary Office Books, 1995), 11; Asa Briggs offered the now well-known quote: 'Warfare had necessitated welfare,' in A. Flanders and H.A. Clegg, *The System of Industrial Relations in Great Britain* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1954), 26; see also, disuccsion in Chapter 3 Literature Review.

[23]James Hinton, *Nine Wartime Lives*; David Edgerton, 'War, Reconstruction and the Nationalization of Britain, 1939-1951,' *Past and Present*, Vol 210 No 6 (September 2011), 29-46, 30, referring to Alan S. Milward, *The Economic Efforts of Two World Wars on Britain*, 2nd ed. (London: Macmillan, 1984), 27; David Edgerton, *Britain's War Machine: Weapons, Resources, and Experts in the Second World War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Mathew Thomson, 'Psychology and the "Consciousness of Modernity" in Early Twentieth-Century Britain', 97-118, in eds. Martin Daunton and Bernhard Rieger, *Meanings of Modernity*: *Britain from the Late-Victorian Era to World War II* (Oxford: Berg, 2001), 97-118, 97; Claire Langhamer, 'Love, Selfhood and Authenticity in Post-War Britain,' *Cultural and Social History*, Vol 9 No 2 (June 2012), 277-297; Martin Daunton and Bernhard Rieger, 'Introduction,' in eds. Daunton and Rieger, *Meanings of Modernity*, 1; Mike Savage, *Identities and Social Change in Britain Since 1940: The Politics of Method*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 51.

[23] Edgerton, *Britain's War Machine,* 6.

[24] Hinton, *Nine Wartime Lives*, 204.

[25] David Cannadine, *The Rise and Fall of Class in Britain* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 193.

[26] Alun Munslow, *The Routledge Companion to Historical Studies,* 2nd ed. (Milton Park: Routledge, 2000), 13.

[27] Philippa Perry, quoting psychoanalyst Peter Lomas in *How to Stay Sane* (London: Macmillan, 2012), 21.

[28] Hinton, *Nine Wartime Lives*, 199.

[29] John Tosh, *The Pursuit of History: Aims, Methods and New Directions in the Study of Modern History,* 5th ed. (Milton Park: Routledge, 2009), 262.

[30] *Ibid.*, 262; Hinton, *Nine Wartime Lives*, 19.

[31] Context is an important consideration in the study of lives discussed by Tosh, *Pursuit of History*, 262; Branaman, 'Introduction to Part III: The Self in Social Context,' in *Self and Society*, 172, which will be discussed in relation to this thesis in Chapter 2 Methodology.

[32] This branch campus of the University of Maryland closed in 2015.

[33] This was encountered in innumerable shops across the country selling wartime reproduction or wartime themed items, at local and national museum exhibitions, such as at St Paul's Cathedral, London, and 1940s themed weekends, such as at Haworth, West Yorkshire.

[34] Richard Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy: Aspects on Working Class Life* (originally published 1957, reprinted New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Publishers/Rutgers University Press, 1998), 73.

[35] Arlie Russell Hochschild, 'Emotion Work, Feeling Rules, and Social Structure', *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol 85 No 3 (November 1979), 551-575, 557-558.

[36] *Ibid*., 557-558.

[37] Max Hastings, *All Hell Let Loose: The World at War 1939-1945* (London: HarperCollins UK, 2011), xviii.

[38] Dave Russell, *Looking North: Northern England and the National Imagination* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), 6, referring to D. Pocock and R. Hudson, *Images of the Urban Environment* (London: Macmillan, 1978), chapter 8.

[39] Langhamer, 'Love, Selfhood and Authenticity in Post-War Britain', 293.

[40] Keith Thomas, 'An Anthropology of Religion and Magic, II', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 6 (1975), 98, quoted in David Gentilcore, 'Anthropological Approaches', 165-186, 168, in eds. Stefan Berger, Heiko Feldner and Kevin Passmore, *Writing History: Theory and Practice*, 2nd ed. (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2010).

[41] Ed. Helen D. Millgate, *Mr Brown's War: A Diary of the Second World War* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 1998), xi.

[42] Ed. Anthony Elliott, *Routledge Handbook of Identity Studies* (Milton Park: Routledge, 2011), xii.

[43] Hinton, Nine Wartime Lives, 63-64.

[44] *Ibid.*, 63.

[45] Atkins, *Narrative Identity and Moral Identity*, 2-3.

[46] Oshana, *Importance of How We See Ourselves*, 4.

[47] *Ibid*., 4.

[48] Atkins, *Narrative Identity and Moral Identity,* 1.

[49] *Ibid.,* 1.

[50] Oshana, *Importance of How We See Ourselves*, 46.

[51] Atkins, *Narrative Identity and Moral Identity,* 2-3.

[52] *Ibid.,* 2-3, referencing Michael Foucault.

[53] *Ibid.,* 3, drawing from Hilde Lindemann Nelson.

[54] Judith A. Howard, 'A Sociological Framework of Cognition,' 97-120, 102, in ed. Branaman, *Self and Society*.

[55] Atkins, *Narrative Identity and Moral Identity,* 6.

[56] Oshana, *Importance of How We See Ourselves*, 4.

[57] *Ibid*., 2.

[58] *Ibid.,* 39.

[59] See, Tosh, *Pursuit of History*, 181, quoting Raphael Samuel.

[60] Michael Roper, 'The Unconscious Work of History', *Cultural and Social History*, Vol 11 No 2 (2014), 169-194, 179.

[61] Atkins, *Narrative Identity and Moral Identity*, 2.

[62] *Ibid*., 1; Christine Korsgaard, *The Sources of Normativity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 101.

[63] See Clifford Geertz, Ch. 1 'Thick Description: Towards an Interpretive Theory of Culture', 3-32, in *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973).

[64] See, for example, Liz Stanley, Andrea Salter and Helen Dampier, 'Olive Schreiner, Epistolary Practices and Microhistories: A Cultural Entrepreneur in a Historical Landscape', *Cultural and Social History*, Vol 10 No 4 (December 2013), 577-597.

[65] Tosh, *Man's Place*, 199.

[66] See, Ch. 3 Literature Review.

[67] Primarily, Branaman, *Self and Society*, ed. Elliott, *Routledge Handbook of Identity,* Aho, *Things of the World*, Geertz, *Interpretation of Cultures*, Oshana, *Importance of How We See Ourselves.*

[68] Oshana, *Importance of How We See Ourselves*, 4.

[69] Hinton, *Nine Wartime Lives*, 5-7.

[70] Charles Lemert, 'A History of Identity: The Riddle at the Heart of the Mystery of Life', 3-29, 11, in ed. Elliott, *Routledge Handbook of Identity Studies*.

[71] See, for example, Preston *Diary*, 1 August 1942.

[72] Hinton, *Nine Wartime Lives*, 6.

[73] Alistair McGrath, *The Intellectual World of C.S. Lewis* (Oxford: John Wiley & Sons, 2014), 39.

[74] Preston *Diary*, 16 August 1941; 18 August 1941.

[75] David Rieff, 'Preface,' in ed. David Rieff, *Susan Sontag, Reborn: Journals and Notebooks, 1947-1963* (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 2008), xi.

[76] Nicholas Lezard, review, 'Diaries, by George Orwell' (London: Penguin Modern Classics, 2010), *The Guardian*, Books, 11 June 2010.

[77] Maev Kennedy, 'Arthur Conan Doyle and the Mystery of the Medical Student's Arctic Adventure,' *The Guardian*, Books, 6 August 2012.

[78] Preston *Diary*, 31 December 1943.

[79] The Preston *Diary* was deposited at WYAS, Bradford in 1987.

[80] Preston *Diary*, 2 August 1945.

[81] *Ibid*., 2 August 1945.

[82] *Ibid*., 12 May 1942.

[83] See, for example, *Ibid.*, 26 December 1941.

[84] Tosh, *Pursuit of History*, 207.

[85] *Ibid.*, 34.

[86] James Aho, *The Things of the World: A Social Phenomenology* (Westport: Praeger, 1998), 60-61.

[87] Tosh, *Pursuit of History*, 36.

[88] R. Keith Schoppa, 'Culture and Context in Biographical Studies: The Case of China,'27-52, 30, in ed. Lloyd E. Ambrosius, *Writing History: Historians and Their Craft* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004).

[89] See, for example, Preston *Diary*, 2 July 1941; 14 October 1943.

[90] Alan Trachtenberg, *Lincoln's Smile and Other Enigmas* (Union Square West: Hill and Wang, 2007), xiii.

[91] Namely Sidney Brown, see Chapter 3 Literature Review for further discussion of Brown's treatment of the Preston *Diary*.

[92] Hinton, *Nine Wartime Lives*, 76.

[93] Tosh, *Pursuit of History*, 76.

[94] Wendy Ugolini, *Experiencing War as the 'Enemy Other': Italian Scottish Experience in World War II* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011).

[95] Allan Allport, *Browned Off and Bloody-Minded: The British Soldier Goes to War 1939-1945* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015).

[96] Tony Kushner, *We Europeans? Mass Observation, 'Race' and British Identity in the Twentieth Century* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004).

[97] Hinton, *Nine Wartime Lives*, 1.

[98] Penny Summerfield, *Reconstructing Women's Wartime Lives: Discourse and Subjectivity in Oral Histories of the Second World War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998); see also Penny Summerfield and Corina Peniston-Bird, *Contesting Home Defence: Men, Women, and the Home Guard in the Second World War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007).

[99] In addition to Hinton, *Nine Wartime Lives* and Summerfield, *Reconstructing Women's Wartime Lives*, see also, Milward, *The Economic Efforts of Two World Wars on Britain*, 2nd ed.; Rieger and Daunton, *Meanings of Modernity*; ed. Kate Macdonald, *The Masculine Middlebrow, 1880-1950: What Mr. Miniver Read* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); Claire Langhamer, *The English in Love: The Intimate Story of an Emotional Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Edgerton, *Britain's War Machine***;** Wendy Webster, *Englishness and Empire 1939-1965* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Weingärtner, *The Arts as a Weapon of War;* Mark Roseman, 'War and the People: The Social

Impact of Total War,' 280-302 in ed. Charles Townshend, *The Oxford History of Modern War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), which illustrate some of the most recent areas of innovative examination.

[100] See, for example Robert Crowcroft, *Attlee's War: World War Two and the Making of a Labour Leader* (London: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 2011); Review of David Edgerton, *Britain's War Machine*, by Robert Crowcroft, *Twentieth Century British History*, Vol 24 No 1 (2013), 140-142; Milward, *Economic Efforts of Two World Wars on Britain*; Edgerton, *Britain's War Machine*; Allport, *Browned Off and Bloody-Minded*.

[101] Daunton and Rieger, *Meanings of Modernity.*

[102] Pat Thane, 'Introduction: Exploring post-war Britain,' *Cultural and Social Journal*, Special Series: The Social Self in Post War Britain series, part I, Vol 9 No 2 (June 2012), 271-275.

[103] Kathleen Burke, *Troublemaker: The Life and History of A.J.P. Taylor* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 56; on the other hand, Richard Titmuss, credited as writing one of the most influential of histories received no formal training. In addition to A.J.P. Taylor, Burke includes Hugh Trevor-Roper, Alan Bullock, Veronica Wedgewood, Elizabeth Wiskemann, Gerald Reitlinger, Georffrey Barrallough, and John Wheeler-Bennett being of this generation of historians.

[104] A.J.P. Taylor, *English History 1914-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965), 551.

[105] This is not limited to works completed in the initial post-war era, rather many of the scholars treating the Second World War published well into the 2000s lived through the conflict and some scholars born after the war still admit to being heavily influenced by relatives and cultural products from the war such as television shows 'Colditz' and 'Dad's Army'; see, for instance, Mark Connelly, *We Can Take It!: Britain and the Memory of the Second World War* (Routledge: Milton Park, 2004), particularly Introduction, 1-25.

[106] Mark Donnelly, *Britain in the Second World War* (Milton Park: Routledge, 1999), 1-2; see also, Jose Harris, 'War and Social History: Britain and the Home Front During the Second World War', *Contemporary European History*, Vol 1 No 1 (March 1992), 17-35.

[107] Winston Churchill*, The Second World War*, 6 volumes (London: HoughtonMifflin, 1948-1953), the influence of which is spoken to in Churchill receiving the 1953 Nobel Prize in literature.

[108] See, for example, Weingärtner, *The Arts as a Weapon of War*; Slocombe, *British Posters of the Second World War*, 1-3; Hinton, *Nine Wartime Lives*, 13; Calder, *People's War*, 471.

[109] Richard Titmuss, *Problems of Social Policy* (London: HMSO and Longmans, 1950).

[110] Harris, 'War and Social History', 17-18; Asa Briggs also strongly buttressed the correlation of the war with the rise of the welfare state in his well-known quote: 'Warfare had necessitated welfare,' in eds. A. Flanders and H.A. Clegg, *The System of Industrial Relations in Great Britain*, 26.

[111] Harris, 'War and Social History', 18.

[112] Edgerton, *Britain's War Machine*, 294.

[113] Arthur Marwick, *Britain in the Century of Total War* (London: Bodley Head, 1968); Arthur Marwick, *War and Social Change in the Twentieth Century* (London: Macmillan, 1974).

[114] Calder, *People's War*.

[115] *Ibid.,* 357, for instance, offers that the war effort presented to the nation a common goal and therein provided for some: 'a proud, even gay motive for existence.'

[116] Edgerton, *Britain's War Machine*, 6; David Edgerton, 'War, reconstruction and the nationalization of Britain, 1939-1951', *Past and Present*, Vol 210 No 6 (September 2011), 29-46, 30.

[117] Edgerton, *Britain's War Machine*, 6.

[118] Mark Roseman, 'War and the People: The Social Impact of Total War', in ed. Charles Townshend, *The Oxford History of Modern War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 280-302, 300.

[119] See, for example, Norman Longmate, *How We Lived Then: A History of Everyday Life during the Second World War* (London: Hutchinson & Co. Ltd., 1971); Norman Longmate, *The Story of the Home Guard* (London: Arrow Books, 1974); Susan Briggs, *Keep Smiling Through* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1975), 197-219, Leo Kessler and Eric Taylor, *Yorkshire at War: The Story of Fighting Yorkshire at Home and Abroad, 1939-1945* (Clapham: Dalesman, 1979).

[120] This produced innumerable local histories, for those concerning West Yorkshire, see, for example, Caroline Brown and the Baildon Oral History Group, *Images of England: Ilkley at War* (Stroud: Tempus Publishing Limited, 2004); *Wartime Remembered* (Shipley: Shipley Print Group, 2000); Eccleshill Local History Group, *Jamjars, Bugles and Bombs: Wartime Reminiscences* (Bradford: University of Bradford Student Union Print Shop, 2005); ed. Linda Wright, *What We Did in the War: Keighley Women of Today Recall Their Wartime Experiences* (Keighley: Aireprint, 2000), which are representative and can be found in the Bradford Local History Archives.

[121] Donnelly, *Britain in the Second World War*, 2; see, also Harris, 'War and Social Change', 19.

[122] Tosh, *Pursuit of History*, 268.

[123] Jeffrey Richards, 'What is the History of Popular Culture?', *History Today*, Vol 35 No 12 (1985), http://www.historytoday.com/jeffrey-richards/what-history-popular-culture-iii (accessed 5 March 2012).

[124] Harris, 'War and Social Change', 19.

[125] Angus Calder, *The Myth of the Blitz* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1991).

[126] Harold Smith, *Britain in the Second World War: A Social History* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996).

[127] Roseman, 'War and the People', 301-302.

[128] See, for example, Summerfield, *Reconstructing Women's Wartime Lives*; Summerfield and Peniston-Bird, *Contesting Home Defence*; Gill Clarke, *The Women's Land Army: A Portrait* (Bristol: Sansom & Company Ltd., 2008).

[**129**] See, for example, Ugolini, *Experiencing War as the 'Enemy Other'.*

[130] Mark Roodhouse, *Black Market Britain: 1939-1955* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

[131] For some re-analysis of the role of Russia in the conflict, see, David Reynolds (presenter), 'World War Two: 1941 and the Man of Steel', *British Broadcasting Corporation*, first aired 13 June 2011, 1 episode; for discussion of the recognition of the multi-national nature of Allied forces, see, Wendy Webster, 'Transnational Communities of Allies,' 209-234, 210, in eds. Wendy Ugolini and Juliette Pattinson, *Fighting for Britain? Negotiating Identities in Britain During the Second World War* (Oxford: Peter Lang AG, 2015).

[132] See, for example, Webster, *Englishness and Empire*; Edgerton, *Britain's War Machine*, 9-10.

[133] See, for further discussion, Review of David Edgerton, *Britain's War Machine: Weapons, Resources, and Experts in the Second World War* (London: Allen Lane, 2011), by Robert Crowcroft, *Twentieth Century British History*, Vol 24 No 1 (2013), 140-142, 140.

[134] Ed. Howlett and the Central Statistical Office, *Fighting with Figures*, 11.

[135] Sonya Rose, *Which People's War?: National Identity and Citizenship in Wartime Britain 1939-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 69-70.

[136] Connelly, *We Can Take It!.*

[137] Review of James Hinton, *Nine Wartime Lives*, by Hester Vaizey, *Times Higher Education*, April 15, 2010, https://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/books/nine-wartime-lives-mass-observation-and-the-making-of-the-modern-self/411247.article.

[138] Peter Burke, quoting Stephen Greenblatt, in *What is Cultural History?* 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Polity, 2008), 42.

[139] Summerfield and Peniston-Bird, *Contesting Home Defence*, 280.

[140] Harris, 'War and Social Change,' 20.

[141] Edgerton, *Britain's War Machine*, 6.

[142] David Edgerton, 'War, Reconstruction and the Nationalization of Britain, 1939-1951,' 30, referring to Milward, *The Economic Efforts of Two World Wars on Britain*, 2nd ed., 27.

[143] Edgerton, *Britain's War Machine*, 6.

[144] *Ibid.*, 7.

[145] *Ibid.*, 10.

[146] Edgerton, 'War, Reconstruction and the Nationalization of Britain, 1939-1951,' 30.

[147] This was due to u-boat attacks and attempts to blockade the United Kingdom by Germany which severely limited food imports; the food situation was compounded by the need to divert food supplies to the Armed Services.

[148] Lizzy Collingham, *The Taste of War: World War II and the Battle for Food* (London: Penguin, 2011).

[149] For discussion of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's harking back to the Second World War in public debates over the Falkland's War, see, Noakes, *War and the British*, 105.

[150] Patrick Wright, *On Living in an Old Country: The National Past in Contemporary Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009, first published by Verso, 1985).

[151] This is seen, for instance, in popular televisions programmes (Ration Book Britain, *Yesterday*; The Wartime Kitchen and Garden, *British Broadcasting Corporation*; Wartime Farm, *British Broadcasting Corporation*; Dancing Through the Blitz: Blackpool's Big Band Story, *British Broadcasting Corporation*), museum exhibitions with wartime themes and the selling of wartime reproductions in museum gift shops, as well as shops at National Trust and English Heritage heritage sites and in local council tourist information centres across the UK, as well as in the 1940 themed days/weekends and railway events held across the country, theme museums such as the Churchill War Experience (London) and Eden's Camp (Malton, North Yorkshire), there is also an interactive mobile application, Bomb Sight, which allows people to map the damage to London done by the Luftwaffe attacks; for more on the resurgence of reproduction items, see: Stuart Hughes, 'The Greatest Motivational Poster Ever?', *BBC News*, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/magazine/7869458.stm

[152] See, for example, Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy*; Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1973); J.G.A. Pocock, 'British History: A Plea for a New Subject', *Journal of Modern History*, Vol 47 No 4 (December 1975), 601–621; Russell, *Looking North.*

[153] See, for example, Lucy Noakes, *War and the British: Gender and National Identity, 1939-91* (London: I.B. Taurus, 1998); Rose, *Which People's War?*; eds. Lucy Noakes and Juliette Pattinson, *British Cultural Memory and the Second World War* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014).

[154] See, for example, Rose, *Which People's War?*; Lucy Noakes, *War and the British*.

[155] The evolution of this emphasis in MOI output is discussed in Slocombe, *British Posters of the Second World War*; Robert Mackay, *Half the Battle: Civilian Morale in Britain During the Second World War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002).

[156] Hinton, *Nine Wartime Lives*, 13.

[157] Hinton, Nine Wartime Lives, 19.

[158] Katherine Knight, *Spuds, Spam and Eating for Victory in the Second World War: Rationing in the Second World War* (Stroud: The History Press, 2011), 1.

[159] Hastings, *All Hell Let Loose*, xviii.

[160] Review of eds. Robert Malcolmson and Peter Searby, *Wartime in West Suffolk: The Diary of Winifred Challis, 1942-1943* (Boydell Press/Suffolk Records Society, 2012), by Sally Sokoloff, *The Local Historian*, Vol 44 No 1 (January 2014).

[161] Hinton, *Nine Wartime Lives*, 204.

[162] Mark Roodhouse, 'Observing the 1940s', *Twentieth Century British History,* Vol 18 No 1 (2007), 134-139; see also, Savage, *Identities and Social Change in Britain since 1940*.

[163] Kushner, *We Europeans?*.

[164] This is compared with published diaries without critical analysis, such as for instance, eds. Patricia and Robert Malcolmson, *Warriors at Home 1940-1942: Three Surrey Diarists* (Surrey Record Society, 2012); ed. Jenny Hartley, *Few Eggs and No Oranges: Vere Hodgson's Diary, 1940-45* (London: Persephone Books Ltd., 1999); ed. Nicholas Webley, *Betty's Wartime Diary 1939-1945* (London: Thorogood, 2003); ed. Juliet Gardiner, *These Wonderful Rumours!: A Young Schoolteacher's Wartime Diaries 1939-1945* (London: Virago, 2012); ed. Simon Garfield, *We Are At War: The Remarkable Diaries of Five Ordinary People* (London: Ebury Press, 2006).

[165] *Ibid.*, 262 and Hinton, *Nine Wartime Lives*, 19, respectively.

[166] Burke, *What is Cultural History?*, 44.

[167] Burke, *What is Cultural History?*, 44-45.

[168] Burke, *What is Cultural History?*, 45.

[169] Tosh, *Pursuit of History*, 158.

[170] Burke, *What is Cultural History?*, 47.

[171] Burke, *What is Cultural History?*, 47.

[172] Carlo Ginzburg, translated by John and Anne Tedeschi, *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller*, (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1980); Christopher Dyer, *A Country Merchant, 1495-1520: Trading and Farming at the End of the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); Matthew Lundin, *Paper Memory: A Sixteenth-century Townsman Writes His World* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012); Tosh, *Man's Place*; Laura Thatcher Ulrich, *A Midwife's Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard, Based on Her Diary, 1785-1812* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.,1991).

[173] John Tosh, response to Review of *Man's Place,* by Anthony Fletcher, *Institute of Historical Research Reviews in History* (October 1999), accessed August 2012.

[174] Review of Melanie Tebbutt, *Being Boys: Youth, Leisure and Identity in the Inter-War Years* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012), by John Griffiths, *Institute of Historical Research Reviews in History* (May 2012), by John Griffiths, http://www.history.ac.uk/reviews/review/1257, accessed May 2012.

[175] Cannadine, *Rise and Fall of Class in Britain*, 193; Langhamer, 'Love, Selfhood and Authenticity in Post-War Britain,' 293.

[176] Hinton, *Nine Wartime Lives*, 19, 63.

[177] Peter J. Atkins, 'Fattening Children or Fattening Farmers? School Milk in Britain, 1921–1941', *The Economic History Review*, Vol 58 No 1 (February 2005), 57-78, 76.

[178] Chris Sladen, 'Holidays at Home in the Second World War', *Journal of Contemporary History,* Vol 37 No 1 (January 2002), 67–89.

[179] Peter Watson, *The Age of Nothing: How We Have Sought to Live Since the Death of God* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2014).

[180] Alex Owen, 'Occultism and the "Modern" Self in *Fin-de-siècle* Britain,' 71-96, 75, in eds. Daunton and Rieger, *Meanings of Modernity*, referring to H. Stuart Hughes, *Consciousness and Society: The Reorientation of European Social Thought, 1890-1930* (1958; reprinted, Brighton: Harvester Press, 1979).

[181] Owen, 'Occultism and the "Modern" Self in *Fin-de-siècle* Britain,' 75-76.

[182] Levi, 'On Microhistory,' 98-99.

[183] Sidney Brown, 'Tarnishing the Gold Standard Grammar School: A Teacher's Disenchantment, 1941-1966,' *Open History*, No 111 (Spring 2011), 19-24; Sidney Brown, 'Are You Kidding Keighley's Kids

Mr Hitler?' *Open History*, No 115 (Spring 2012), 14-17, which was republished as Sidney Brown, 'A 'War of Words' at Keighley Grammar School. 1936-46,' *Children in War Journal,* Vol 1 No 11 (March 2014), 41-44.

[184] Dewhirst, *Keighley in the Second World War*, 41.

[185] Preston *Diary*, 4 September 1941.

[186] See also, Doreen Parratt, 'The North East of England in Wartime Project,' *Second World War Experience Centre*, 3-6, for discussion of the work of YMCA in Scarborough, http://www.war-experience.org/history/keyaspects/northeast/article.pdf, accessed 12 August 2012.

[187] Clive D. Field, '*Puzzled People* Revisited: Religious Believing and Belonging in Wartime Britain, 1939-45', *Twentieth Century British History*, Vol 19 No 4 (2008), 446-479, 446.

[188] Review of S.J.D. Green, *The Passing of Protestant England: Secularisation and Social Change, c.1920-1960* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), by Barry M. Doyle, *Twentieth Century British History,* Vol 23 No 4 (2012), 584-585.

[189] No work was found in the course of this research which is concerned with the war experience of middle-class male civilians: several studies have been found to be concerned with the examination of male reserved occupationists, but deal with industrial and other workers, these include the project '*Masculinities Challenged? Reserved Occupations in Britain, 1939-1945',* overseen by Juliette Pattinson with the assistance of Linsey Robb [from which stemmed Linsey Robb, *Men at Work: The Working Man in British Culture, 1939-1945* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015)] http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/News-and-Events/Features/Pages/Masculinities-Challenged---Reserved-Occupations-in-Britain,-1939-1945.aspx; Lucy Noakes and Susan Grayzel ,'Serving the Nation, Safeguarding the Home: Civil Defence, Citizenship, and Gender in Twentieth-Century Britain' http://arts.brighton.ac.uk/study/humanities/news/wartime-research-wins-award; in many respects, a work on the First World War home front bears the greatest similarity in its pursuit of the middle-class male civilian, this is Laura Ugolini, *Civvies: Middle-Class Men on the English Home Front, 1914–18* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013).

[190] Maggie Andrews and Janis Lomas*, The Home Front in Britain: Images, Myths and Forgotten Experiences Since 1914* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

[191] See, Lynn MacGill, The Emergence of Public Parks in Keighley, West Yorkshire, 1887-1893: Leisure, Pleasure or Reform?', *Garden History*, Vol 35 No 2 (2007), 146-159.

[192] The prevalence amongst Keighley shopkeepers to align with the Conservative party is discussed in James, *Class and Politics in a Northern Industrial Town,* 36.

[193] Cannadine, *Rise and Fall of Class in Britain,* 110; discussion of class as it related here is also found in Cannadine, *Rise and Fall of Class in Britain,* 120; James, *Class and Politics in a Northern Industrial Town,* 15; Robert Graves and Alan Hodge, *The Long Week-End: A Social History of Great Britain 1918-1939* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1963), 64.

[194] Ross McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures: England 1918-1951* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 47.

[195] *Ibid.*

[196] It is also possible also that this move coincided with Preston's grandmother entering a state of widowhood.

[197] Allan Preston, 5 August 2013, letter to the author, states that Alice Preston had worked as a domestic servant for the Thwaites family (brewers in Blackburn) prior to her marriage as well.

[198] David James, *Class and Politics in a Northern Industrial Town: Keighley 1880-1914* (Poulton Le Fylde: Ryburn Publishing, 1995), 15.

[199] *Ibid.*, 12.

[200] Preston *Diary*, 21 July 1941.

[201] *Ibid.*, 1 January 1943.

[202] Herbert Preston's involvement in religious activity of the Church of England congregation in Keighley is discussed in Allan Preston, 'Kenneth Preston Autobiography', 1995, WYAS, Bradford. 6D87, 1-6, 1.

[203] Kenneth Preston, 'Beginning for Autobiography', 1935, WYAS, Bradford, 6D87/20, 1-6, 1.

[204] The relationship between employers and workers in the town at this time is discussed in S.J.D. Green, *Religion in the Age of Decline: Organisation and Experience in Industrial Yorkshire, 1870-1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 68.

[205] Some pieces of Kenneth Preston's writing, school work, and correspondences are housed in Box 6D87 at WYAS, Bradford. Discussed here are two essays, 'Wit & Humour' 6D87/21 and 'Nature Poetry and Nature Poets' 6D87/7. Neither give any indication of the year in which they were written, though it is clear from the handwriting and composition that the essay on nature poetry came prior to that on wit and humour. The essay on nature poetry was likely done at a relatively young age, less than twelve years of age.

[206] Preston *Diary*, 29 September 1941.

[207] This was described in a letter from Allan Preston, 16 January 2013, wherein it is conveyed this talk was given to an audience of Toc H members on 28 May 1947.

[208] See, for example, Preston *Diary*, 16 February 1943.

[209] Kenneth Preston's friendship with Allan Firth is recounted in Kenneth Preston, 'Beginning for Autobiography', 3-5.

[210] Kenneth Preston, 'Beginning for Autobiography', 1, 5; Allan Preston, 'Kenneth Preston Biography', 1.

[211] Kenneth Preston, 'Beginning for Autobiography', 3.

[212] Green, *Religion in the Age of Decline*, 182.

[213] Preston *Diary*, 27 March 1942.

[214] Green, *Religion in the Age of Decline*, 181-182. The 'Associational ideal' is explained as something which: 'should not be dismissed as a perversion of the Christian ethic. It was not. Nor may it legitimately be derided as the cynical expression of organizational interest. It was always something more than that, for in its sheer comprehensiveness, in the declared aim of securing by every institutional means the most extensive inclusion of all of God's people in Christ's various acknowledged churches, it offered ordinary men and women the real attractions of a divine social activity, the genuine possibility of meaningful self-improvement and the ultimate sacred goal of personal salvation. In so doing, it transformed many individual lives.'

[215] See, *Ibid.*, 223-241, for a discussion of Sunday School.

[216] *Ibid.*, 233-36.

[217] Stanley Baldwin, 'What England Means to Me', speech to the Royal Society of St George, 6 May 1924, http://spinnet.eu/images/2013-05/baldwin1924.pdf, accessed 6 September 2012; Green, *Religion in the Age of Decline*, 368-69, 100.

[218] *The English Tradition*, 2nd ed. (Upper Saddle River: Pearson-Prentice Hall, 1991), 772; see also for Preston's own expressions of individualism, Preston *Diary*, 3 December 1942; 6 May 1944; 2 December 1944; 11 February 1945; 1 June 1945; see also, Allan Preston, 'Kenneth Preston Autobiography', 1.

[219] Dewhirst, *History of Keighley,* 110.

[220] Preston's career at Keighley Trade and Grammar is recounted in Kenneth Preston, 'Beginning for Autobiography', 1-6.

[221] Preston's theatre roles prior to the Second World War included Sir Toby Belch in *Twelfth Night*, *The Keighlian*, (May 1921), No 93; Pyramus in *A Midsummer's Nights Dream*, *The Keighlian,* Vol 16, No 100 (May 1923), 60; Young Gobbo in *Merchant of Venice*, *The Keighlian,* Vol 16, No 102 (April 1924), 65; Mr Ingot in *David Garrick*, *The Keighlian,* Vol 24, No 113 (March 1928), 7; Bob Acres in *The*

Rivals, *The Keighlian*, No 117 (July 1929), 25; Moriarty in *Sherlock Holmes*, *The Keighlian,* No 107 (March 1926); Samuel Pepys in *And So To Bed*, Preston *Diary*, 22 February 1942, as well as assisting in productions in other ways, such as directing, set construction, and costuming.

[222] Kenneth Preston, 'Beginning for Autobiography', 5.

[223] Preston *Diary*, 20 December 1944; Allan Preston, letter to the author, 10 May 2013; Kenneth Preston, 'Beginning of Autobiography', 3.

[224] Allan Preston, 'Kenneth Preston Biography', 4.

[225] Kenneth Preston, 'Beginning for Autobiography', 5-6.

[226] *Ibid*., 5; T.P. Watson letter, 26 September 1922, to University Registry, Oxford, WYAS, Bradford, 6D87/7.

[227] See, Kenneth Preston, 'The Prize Distribution', 1-5, section 'The School and the Empire', 3. WYAS, Bradford, 6D87/21.

[228] Kenneth Preston, 'Beginning for Autobiography', 5.

[229] Kenneth Preston and Kathleen Green's courtship and marriage is discussed in Allan Preston, 'Kenneth Preston Biography', 2-4; sporadically referred to in Kenneth Preston, 'Beginning for Autobiography', 3-4.

[230] Graves and Hodge, *The Long Week-End,* 28, 18-19.

[231] See, Richard Overy, *The Twilight Years: The Paradox of Britain Between the Wars* (New York: Viking Penguin, 2009); in Britain this was released as *The Morbid Age: Britain between the Wars* (London: Allen Lane, Penguin Books Ltd., 2009).

[232] Graves and Hodge, *Long Week-End*, 122.

[233] Kenneth Preston, 'Beginning of Autobiography', 6.

[234] Keith Robbins, *Great Britain: Identities, Institutions and the Idea of Britishness* (Milton Park: Routledge, 1997), 260; McGrath, *Intellectual World of C.S. Lewis,* 35-37.

[235] Robbins, *Great Britain,* 272.

[236] Allan Preston, 'Kenneth Preston Biography', 2.

[237] Kenneth Preston, 'Beginning for Autbiography', 6; this is occasionally referred to in the Preston *Diary* as well.

[238] A. M. D. Hughes, Letter of Recommendation on behalf of Kenneth Preston, 3 August 1925, WYAS, Bradford, 6D87/10.

[239] Overy, *Twilight Years*, 48.

[240] Overy, *Twilight Years*, 13; Graves and Hodge, *Long Week-End*, 271.

[241] McGrath, *Intellectual World of C.S. Lewis,* 32.

[242] Preston had cards from Oxford Union Society debate questions from his time at Oxford. WYAS, Bradford, 6D87/14.

[243] Kenneth Preston, 'Beginning for Autobiography', 3.

[244] Overy, *Twilight Years*, 10.

[245] 21 June 1923. Oxford Union Society debate questions. WYAS, Bradford, 6D87/14.

[246] 28 February 1924. Oxford Union Society debate questions. WYAS, Bradford, 6D87/14.

[247] Overy, quoting George N. Clark, 'The Instability of Civilisation', *Hibbert Journal*, 31 (1932/3), 645-53, in *Twilight Years*, 9.

[248] *Ibid.*, 29.

[249] Kenneth Preston, 'Beginning for Autobiography', 6.

[250] See, for example, Preston *Diary*, 11 April 1941; 8 July 1941; 25 July 1941; 12 August 1941; 11 December 1941; 18 July 1942; 3 January 1943; 13 December 1943; 17 December 1943; 28 February 1944; 27 October 1944; 31 October 1944; 10 August 1945.

[250] *Ibid*., 27 October 1944; 31 October 1944.

[251] Kenneth Preston, 'Beginning for Autobiography', 6.

[252] Testimonial from T.P. Watson, 10 February 1930, WYAS, Bradford, 6D87/10.

[253] Allan Preston, 'Biography of Kenneth Preston', 2.

[254] 'The History of Toc H', *Toc H*, accessed November 18, 2015, http://www.toch-uk.org.uk/History.html.

[255] Kenneth Preston, 'Beginning for Autobiography', 5-6; Allan Preston, 'Kenneth Preston Biography', 2.

[256] Eds. Bernard Spilka, Ralph W. Hood, Jr., Bruce Hunsberger, and Richard Gorsuch, *Psychology of Religion: An Empirical Approach,* 3rd ed. (New York: The Guilford Press, 2003), 161.

[257] See, for example, Preston *Diary,* 4 November 1941.

[258] See, for example, *Ibid.,* 4 November 1941.

[259] See, for example, *Ibid.,* 13 November 1941.

[260] This is stated in William Temple, *Christianity and the Social Order* (1942), 67; however, Matthew Grimley states this was an old theme of Temples in *Citizenship, Community, and the Church of England: Liberal Anglican Theories of the State Between the Wars* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 207.

[261] Cannadine, *The Rise and Fall of Class in Britain*, 142; Preston had several pamphlets written in part by Stanley Baldwin, including *Working for Peace: A Review of Great Britain's Efforts to Promote World Peace 1931-1935*, with a foreword by the Rt. Hon. Stanley Baldwin, M.P., and an introduction by the Rt. Hon. Anthony Eden, M.P. (Burrup, Matheson & Co., Ltd., 1935), WYAS, Bradford, 6D87/27.

[262] Kenneth Preston, 'Beginning of Autobiography', 4.

[263] Allan Preston, 'Biography of Kenneth Preston', 2.

[264] Asa Briggs, *Special Relationships: People and Places* (Barnsley: Frontline Books, 2012), 5.

[265] W. Healey, Testimonial on behalf of Kenneth Preston, 27 March 1933, WYAS, Bradford, 6D87/10.

[266] T. P. Watson, Testimonial on behalf of Kenneth Preston, February 10, 1930, WYAS, Bradford, 6D87/10; *Keighley News*, 'Tributes to English Master', July 21, 1962, 6D87/13, WYAS, Bradford; *The Keighlian*, 'Kenneth Preston', Summer 1962, 7-8, Keighley Local History Library.

[267] T. P. Watson, Letter of Recommendation on behalf of Kenneth Preston, February 10, 1930, 6D87/10, WYAS, Bradford.

[268] Healey, 'testimonial', 27 March 1933.

[269] Briggs, *Special Relationships*, 5.

[270] McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures*, 102.

[271] Kenneth Preston, 'Keeping Up Appearances: A Bachelor Speaks'. An essay written sometime between 1927-1929. WYAS, Bradford, 6D87/14; a wider discussion of men's clothing during the 1930s was found in Graves and Hodge, *Long Week-End*, 375.

[272] This tradition is discussed in J.B. Priestley, *English Journey* (Reprinted London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1994), 164.

[273] Preston *Diary*, 31 March 1943.

[274] Nicola Humble quoted by Ann Rea, 'The Collaborator, the Tyrant and the Resistance: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe and Masculine 'Middlebrow' England in the Second World War', 177-

194, 177 in ed. Kate Macdonald, *The Masculine Middlebrow, 1880-1950: What Mr Miniver Read* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

[275] *Ibid.,* 182.

[276] Andrew Miles and Mike Savage, 'The Strange Survival of the English Gentleman, 1945-2010', *Cultural and Social History*, Vol 9 No 4 (December 2012), 595-612, 603.

[277] Cannadine, *Rise and Fall of Class in Britain*, 136.

[278] McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures*, 57-58, 67; Graves and Hodge, *Long Week-End*, 260; James, *Class and Politics in a Northern Industrial Town*, 417; the rise of the radical right on the Continent which caused some members of the middle classes to shift politically leftwards parallel to shift of others to the right is discussed in Lawrence James, *The Middle Class: A History* (London: Abacus, 2008), 417.

[279] Robbins, *Great Britain*, 23.

[280] Cannadine, *Rise and Fall of Class in Britain*, 141-3.

[281] Helen McCarthy, 'Associational Voluntarism in Interwar Britain', 47-68, 54-55, in eds. Matthew Hilton and James McKay, *The Ages of Voluntarism: How We Got to the Big Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

[282] *Working for Peace: A Review of Great Britain's Efforts to Promote World Peace 1931-1935*, with a foreword by the Rt. Hon. Stanley Baldwin, M.P., and an introduction by the Rt. Hon. Anthony Eden, M.P. (Burrup, Matheson & Co., Ltd., 1935), WYAS, Bradford, 6D87/27.

[283] Deborah Cohen, *Household Gods: The British and Their Possessions* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 192; this is also discussed in McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures*, 73-75; Michael Wood, *The Story of England* (New York: Viking, 2010), 388, Graves and Hodge, *Long Week-End*, 171 and in relation to Keighley in Dewhirst, *History of Keighley,* 130-31.

[284] McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures,* 61, 70-71.

[285] Jon Lawrence, 'Class, 'Affluence' and the Study of Everyday Life in Britain, c. 1930-64', *Cultural and Social History*, Vol 19 No 2 (June 2013), 273-299, 282.

[286] Priestley, *English Journey*, 177.

[287] McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures,* 44-104, provides a thorough examination of the middle-class between the two world wars.

[288] Kenneth Preston, 'Beginning for Autobiography', 1.

[289] Thomson, 'Psychology and the "Consciousness of Modernity" in Early Twentieth-century Britain,' in eds. Daunton and Rieger, *Meanings of Modernity*, 99, quoting a Blackpool-based Mr A. Myddleton, a teacher and the publisher of manuals like *Suggestion that Wins, Life Building, How to Analyse Yourself,* and *Psychology in Business*, as well as the editor of the journal Practical Psychology', from *Editorial, Practical Psychology* (September 1925), 2.

[290] Thomson, 'Psychology and the "Consciousness of Modernity" in Early Twentieth-century Britain,' in eds. Daunton and Rieger, *Meanings of Modernity*, 99.

[291] Caroline Pollentier, ' "Everybody's Essayist": On Middles and Middlebrows,' 119-134, 120, in ed. Macdonald, *The Masculine Middlebrow*.

[292] Taking smaller topics under consideration was due to the growing number of weekly and daily essayist publications at this time which required essayists to produce greater numbers of pieces and thus come up with greater amounts of material on which to write; see, Pollentier, 'Everybody's Essayist', 119-120.

[293] Pollentier, 'Everybody's Essayist', 130.

[294] *Ibid*.

[295] *Ibid.*

[296] *Ibid*.

[297] Kate Macdonald, 'Introduction: Identifying the Middlebrow, the Masculine and Mr Miniver', in ed. Macdonald, *Masculine Middlebrow*, 5-6, referring to Andrew King's argument regarding the growth of advertising directories and advertising agencies illustrated by *Mitchell's Press Dictionary* and later, Thomas Smith's annual *Successful Advertising* from 1878 onwards.

[298] See Matthew Hilton, 'Advertising, the Modernist Aesthetic of the Marketplace? The Cultural Relationship Between the Tobacco Manufacturer and the "Mass" of Consumers in Britain, 1870-1940', 45-69, in eds. Daunton and Rieger, *Meanings of Modernity*.

[299] See, for example, Tebbutt, *Being Boys.*

[300] 'G.K. Chesterton: The Apostle of Common Sense,' Daily Truth, *PBS*, originally aired on *EWTN*, written and presented by Dale Ahlquist in 2000.

[301] Ahlquist quoting Chesterton, 'Daily Truth.'

[302] Review of David Reynolds, *The Long Shadow: The Great War and the Twentieth Century,* by Jay Winter, *Institute of Historical Research Reviews in History*, July 2014, accessed July 2014.

[303] Graves and Hodge, *Long Week-End,* 265.

[304] *Ibid.*, 269-270.

[305] Priestley, *English Journey*, 165-166.

[306] Graves and Hodge, *Long Week-End*, 261-262.

[307] *Ibid.*, 261-262.

[308] Preston, 'Beginning of Biography', 1.

[309] Dewhirst, *History of Keighley,* 132.

[310] Dewhirst, *History of Keighley*, 133; see, for mention of presence of European refugees in Keighley, Preston *Diary*, 26 March 1941; 19 April 1941.

[311] Audrey Sharp, 'Everyday life', WW2 People's War, *British Broadcasting Corporation*, 31 January 2006 (accessed 21 June 2010), http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ww2peopleswar/stories/59/a9032159.shtml; Eunice May Jones Née Ruddock, 'Wartime Memories of Everyday Life', WW2 People's War, *British Broadcasting Corporation*, 31 January 2006 (accessed 21 June 2010), http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ww2peopleswar/stories/12/a9032212.shtml.

[312] Audrey Sharp, 'Everyday life', WW2 People's War; Dewhirst, *Keighley in the Second World War*, 21.

[313] Dewhirst, *Keighley in the Second World War*, 18.

[314] See, for discussion of this, Edgerton, *Britain's War Machine*, xv.

[315] See, for example, John Welshman, 'Evacuation and Social Policy During the Second World War: Myth and Reality', *Twentieth Century British* History, Vol 9 No 1 (1998), 28-53; John Welshman, 'Evacuation, Hygiene, and Social Policy: The Our Towns Report of 1943', *The Historical Journal*, Vol 42, No 3 (September 1999), 781-807; Connelly, *We Can Take It!*, Morgan and Evans, *Battle of Britain*.

[316] Calder, *Myth of the Blitz.*

[317] Morgan and Evans*, Battle of Britain*; Noakes, *War and the British*; Rose, *Which People's War?* ; Connelly, *We Can Take It!*

[318] Noakes, *War and the British*, 8.

[319] See, for example, Nicholas Whitfield, 'Who is My Donor? The Local Propaganda Techniques of London's Emergency Blood Transfusion Service, 1939-45', *Twentieth Century British History*, Vol 24 No 4 (2013), 542-572, especially 542; Helen Jones, 'British Cities: Celebrating and Commemorating the Second World War', *The Local Historian*, Vol 42 No 1 (February 2012), 44-53.

[320] Hinton, *Nine Wartime Lives*; Summerfield, *Reconstructing Women's Wartime Lives*; Summerfield and Peniston-Bird, *Contesting Home Defence*.

[321] See, for example, *Rose, Which People's War*?; Wendy Webster, *Imagining Home: Gender, 'Race' and National Identity, 1945-64* (London: University College London Press, 1998); Webster, *Englishness and Empire*; Noakes, *War and the British*; eds. Lucy Noakes and Juliette Pattinson, *British Cultural Memory and the Second World War* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014); Edgerton similarly identified this phenomena in *Britain's War Machine*, 9.

[322] Calder, *People's War*, 76, 106-107.

[323] Dewhirst, *Keighley in the Second World War*, 9.

[324] Calder, *People's War,* 118.

[325] Summerfield and Peniston-Bird, *Contesting Home Defence*, 26.

[326] Quoted in Calder, *People's War*, 119. See also, for the expectation of threat to Britain posed by aerial ability, Brett Holman, 'The Shadow of the Airliner: Commercial Bombers and the Rhetorical Destruction of Britain, 1917-1935', *Twentieth Century Britain*, Vol 24 No 4 (2013), 495-517.

[327] See, Preston *Diary*, 14 May 1943.

[328] See, for example, *Ibid.*, 27 January 1942.

[329] Kessler and Taylor, *Yorkshire at War*, 26, 31, 41, provides information on the bombing of Hull during the war.

[330] Preston *Diary*, 6 January 1941.

[331] *Ibid.*, 4 January 1941.

[332] *Ibid.*, 8 January 1941.

[333] *Ibid.*, 1 February 1941, see also, 15, 16, 17 February 1941.

[334] *Ibid.*, 3 February 1942.

[335] *Ibid.*, 14 January 1941.

[336] *Ibid.*, 28 May 1941. Italics added.

[337] In the case of the Second World War home front, this would have largely taken place leading up to the war and the early stages of the war when civilians were directed to adapt their homes for air raids through the black out and bomb shelters.

[338] Tania Zittoun, Alex Gillespie, Flora Cornish, and Emma-Louise Aveling, 'Using Social Knoweledge: A Case Study of a Diarist's Meaning Making During World War II', 163-182, in eds. Toshio Sugiman, Kenneth J. Gergen, Wolfgang Wagner, and Yoko Yamada, *Meaning in Action: Constructions, Narratives, and Representations* (New York: Springer, 2008).

[339] Preston *Diary*, 7 November 1941.

[340] A.N. Wilson, *After the Victorians: The Decline of Britain in the World* (New York: Picadour, 2005), 394.

[341] Preston *Diary*, 7 October 1941; see also, 3 July 1942.

[342] *Ibid.*, 7 May 1945; see also, 10 July 1942.

[343] See, for example, *Ibid.*, 1 October 1941.

[344] *Ibid.*,, 4 October 1941.

[345] See, for example, *Ibid.*, 26 July 1945.

[346] See, for instance, *Ibid.*, 26 July 1941; 2 July 1942; 16 August 1942; 11 October 1942; 27 October 1942; 3 October 1943.

[347] *Ibid.*, 4 January 1942.

[348] *Ibid.*, 3 May 1942.

[349] *Ibid.*, 11 October 1942.

[350] See, for discussion of developments in the field of psychology at the time, Kandel, *Age of Insight.*

[351] Eds. Rieger and Daunton, *Meanings of Modernity*, 6-7.

[352] See, for example, Preston *Diary*, 28 February 1944.

[353] *Ibid.*, 20 October 1941.

[354] *Ibid.*, 10 August 1945.

[355] *Ibid.*, 21 August 1941.

[356] See, for example, *Ibid.*, 1 September 1941; 28 November 1941; 30 November 1941; 5 December 1941; 13 December 1943.

[357] See, for example, *Ibid.*, 11 April 1941, Max Eastman, *The Literary Mind: It's Place in an Age of Science*; 8 July 1941, Conrad Hal Waddington, *The Scientific Attitude* (Penguin Books); 14 September 1941, Hans Reichenbach, *Atom and Cosmos: The World of Modern Physics* (New York: Macmillan, 1933); 7 December 1944, Lt. Col. Merson Davies, *The Bible and Modern Science*; 30 June 1945, L. Susan Stebbing, *Philosophy and the Physicists* (1937); 13 July 1945, A.D. Ritchie, *Civilization, Science and Religion* (London: Penguin Books, 1945); also read Julian Huxley's talk in 'The Listener' on scientific humanism on 17 December 1943.

[358] Kenneth Preston, 'Beginnings of Autobiography', 4.

[359] Preston *Diary,* 31 December 1942.

[360] *Ibid.*, 7 March 1943.

[361] Beverly Southgate quoting Alasdair MacIntyre, in review of Peter Watson, *The Age of Nothing: How We Have Sought to Live Since the Death of God* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2014), *Institute of Historical Research Reviews in History*, June 2014, accessed June 2014.

[362] Preston *Diary*, 3 May 1942.

[363] The defence of Christian civilisation was included in Winston Churchill's speech 'Their Finest Hour', given to the House of Commons, 18 June 1940, https://www.churchillcentral.com/timeline/audio/their-finest-hour-18-june-1940, accessed 22 December 2015.

[364] Preston *Diary*, 17 March 1942.

[365] See, for example, Preston *Diary*, 2 July 1942; 17 March 1942.

[366] Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), 280.

[367] Susan Pederson, 'Modernity and Trusteeship: Tensions of Empire in Britain Between the Wars', 203-220, 203, in eds. Rieger and Daunton, *Meanings of Modernity*.

[368] Preston *Diary*, 27 October 1942.

[369] *Ibid.*, 24 July 1943.

[370] Winston Churchill, 'Their Finest Hour', speech given to the House of Commons, 18 June 1940; for more on Britain as a 'Christian nation', see Diarmaid MacCulloch (presenter), 'How God Made the English', *British Broadcasting Corporation*, originally aired in March 2012, 3 episodes .

[371] *Ibid.*, 21 May 1943; see also, Calder, *People's War*, 48; P.H.J.H. Gosden, *Education in the Second World War: A Study in Policy and Administration* (reprinted Milton Park: Routledge, 2007), especially 116-117, 120.

[372] Preston *Diary*, 6 June 1942.

[373] *Ibid.*, 7 June 1943.

[374] *Ibid.*, 31 March 1942.

[375] *Ibid.*, 27 February 1942.

[376] *Ibid.*, 27 March 1942.

[377] B.S. and J.N.E. 6A2, 'Memories of school life by some of our poets', *The Keighlian*, No 163 (Christmas 1946), 15.

[378] See, for illustration of Preston's love of theatre, Preston Diary, 22 February 1942; Allan Preston, 'Kenneth Preston Biography', 4; Kenneth Preston, 'Wit and Humour', WYAS, Bradford, 6887/21; *The Keighlian*, Vol 15 No 96 (April 1922), 80; *The Keighlian*, Vol 16 No 100 (May 1923), 60; *The Keighlian*, Vol 16, No 102 (April 1924), 65; *The Keighlian*, No 107 (March 1926), 67; *The Keighlian*, Vol 24 No 113 (March 1928); *The Keighlian*, (25 January 1928), 7; *The Keighlian*, No 117 (July 1929), 25.

[379] Preston *Diary*, 31 March 1942.

[380] See, *Images of Keighley* by the Keighley News (Derby: Breedon Books, 1996), 12.

[381] Preston *Diary*, 27 March 1942.

[382] See, for example, *Ibid.*, 4 June 1942.

[383] Graves and Hodge, *The Long Week-End*, 51.

[384] Preston *Diary,* 17 July 1942.

[385] See, George L. Mosse, *The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996); David Fowler, *Youth Culture in Modern Britain, c. 1920-c.1970: From Ivory Tower to Global Movement – a New History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008); Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska, 'Keep Fit and Play the Game: George VI, Outdoor Recreation and Social Cohesion in Interwar Britain', *Cultural and Social History Journal,* Vol 11 No 1 (March 2014), 111-129.

[386] See, Kenneth Preston, 'Beginning of Autobiography', 5 (referred to only as F.C.M.); T.P. Watson letter, 26 September 1922, to University Registry Oxford, WYAS, Bradford, 6D87/7.

[387] Harrison, *History of the University of Oxford*, 92, 93.

[388] Ken Jones, *Education in Britain: 1944 to the Present* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2003), 4-5, quoting Emile Dirkheim (1961).

[389] Macdonald, quoting S.K. Kent, *Gender and Power in Britain, 1640-1990* (London: Routledge, 1999), 306 in ed. Macdonald, *Masculine Middlebrow*, 13.

[390] McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures*, 207.

[391] This took place 7 March 1933, see, for discussion, R.A., 'Older Boys' Visit', *The Keighlian*, No 129 (July 1933), 9-11.

[392] Doug Thompson, 29 October 2009. Keighley Boys' Grammar School blog. www.kbgs.com.

[393] Preston Diary, 24 September 1941.

[394] Briggs, *Special Relationships,* 5.

[395] See, for example, Preston *Diary*, 15 August 1943.

[396] Preston *Diary,* 12 February 1942.

[397] *Ibid.*, 5 September 1941.

[398] James Fox (presenter), British Masters, 'In Search of England', *British Broadcasting Corporation* Four, originally broadcast June 2011, 2 of 3 episodes.

[399] George Orwell, review of *Mein Kampf* by Adolf Hitler, 12-14 in eds. Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus, *My Country Right or Left 1940-1943*, *The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell, Vol 2* (San Diego: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc. 1968).

[400] Slavoj Žižek, 'Slavoj Žižek Webchat—As It Happened', *The Guardian*, Culture, 8 October 2014, http://www.theguardian.com/books/live/2014/oct/06/slavoj-zizek-webchat-absolute-recoil?page=with%3Ablock-5435390fe4b055589a2e7d6a, accessed 9 October 2014.

[401] Preston states that his efforts began in 1937, but it is not clear from his statement what this early involvement included.

[402] See, for example, *Ibid.*, 23 December 1941; 28 February 1945.

[403] *Ibid.*, 25 January 1942.

[404] Preston *Diary*, 13 November 1943.

[405] *Ibid.*, 31 March 1942.

[406] *Ibid.*, 1 April 1942.

[407] *Ibid.*, 5 December 1941.

[408] *Ibid.*, 28 November 1941; see also, 30 November 1941.

[409] The conceptualization and work of ENSA is discussed in Jörn Weingärtner's *The Arts as a Weapon of War: Britain and the Shaping of National Morale in World War II* (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 2006).

[410] See, for example, Preston *Diary*, 12 November 1941.

[411] See, for example, Dorreen Parratt, The North East of England in Wartime project, Second World War Experience Centre, http://www.war-experience.org/events/the-north-east-of-england-in-wartime/ (Ms Parratt worked at a YMCA in East Boldon during the war).

[412] Preston *Diary*, 12 September 1941.

[413] See, for discussion of Preston's belief in the goodness of being involved in Toc H, *Ibid*., 30 January 1943.

[414] *Ibid.*, 19 June 1941.

[415] *Ibid.*, 29 July 1941.

[416] *Ibid.*, 7 November 1943.

[417] *Ibid.*, 9 December 1944.

[418] See, for example, Preston *Diary*, 3 December 1941; 23 December 1941; 13 May 1942.

[419] *Ibid.*, 26 July 1941.

[420] *Ibid.*, 31 August 1941.

[421] *Ibid.*, 9 November 1942.

[422] *Ibid.*, 8 December 1942.

[423] *Ibid.*, 9 December 1942.

[424] See, for example, *Ibid.*, 5 September 1943; 13 September 1944.

[425] See, *Ibid*., 23 October 1943; 13 November 1943; 23 December 1943.

[426] *Ibid.*, 28 June 1942.

[427] *Ibid.*, 3 July 1941; a much more positive view of ROF Steeton is given by one of its former workers in Alec Lovell, 'Recollections of Alec Lovell at the Royal Ordnance Factory Steeton Nr. Keighley June 1941 - July 1945', WW2 People's War, *British Broadcasting Corporation*, 27 January 2006, http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ww2peopleswar/stories/97/a8900697.shtml, accessed July 2010; see also, Dewhirst, *Keighley in the Second World War*, 75.

[428] Preston *Diary*, 10 March 1942.

[429] *Ibid.*, 20 October 1941.

[430] *Ibid.*, 26 September 1941.

[431] *Ibid.*, 5 May 1941.

[432] *Ibid.*, 26 March 1941.

[433] See, for example, *Ibid.*, 27 April 1942; 8 April 1941.

[434] Lawrence LeShan, *The Psychology of War: Comprehending its Mystique and Madness* (Chicago: Noble Press, 1992), chapter 2, is quoted in Chris Hedges, *War is a Force that Gives Us Meaning* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2002), 21.

[435] Preston *Diary,* 1 December 1944.

[436] *Ibid.*, 14 May 1941.

[437] See, for example, *Ibid.*, 10 March 1942; 4 July 1943.

[438] *Ibid.*, 23 August 1943.

[439] *Ibid.*, 10 January 1943.

[440] *Ibid.*, 5 June 1941.

[441] See, Slocombe, *British Posters of the Second World War;* Linsey Robb, ' "His Own Weapons to His Own Battlefront:" The Civilian Working Man in British Culture 1939-1945', 287-310, in eds. Ugolini and Pattinson, *Fighting For Britain?*

[442] Preston *Diary*, 21 April 1941.

[443] *Ibid.*, 4 September 1941.

[444] *Ibid.*, 4 May 1941.

[445] *Ibid.*, 14 September 1941.

[446] See, for example, *Ibid.*, 24 September 1941.

[447] *Ibid.*, 7 April 1942

[448] *Ibid.*, 2 May 1942.

[449] *Ibid.*, 17 December 1941.

[450] *Ibid.*, 10 April 1942.

[451] See, for example, *Ibid.*, 17 April 1942.

[452] *Ibid.*, 30 January 1944; 2 October 1944.

[453] *Ibid.*, 13 June 1945.

[454] *Ibid.*, 17 April 1942; 19 April 1941; 25 April 1941; see also, David Wragg, *Wartime on the Railways* (Stroud: The History Press, 2006), 178-179; Sladen, 'Holidays at Home in the Second World War', 222.

[455] Dewhirst, *Keighley in the Second World War*, 91.

[456] *Ibid.*, 85; see also, 41, for mention of the Sherwood Foresters 14th Battallion helping with the snow removal in the winter of 1940.

[457] Preston *Diary*, 23 January 1941.

[458] *Ibid.*, 21 January 1941.

[459] *Ibid.*, 3 February 1942.

[460] *Ibid.*, 22 January 1942.

[461] See, for example, *Ibid.*, 28 January 1941.

[462] *Ibid.*, 3 November 1942; 2 February 1942.

[463] *Ibid.*, 11 December 1944.

[464] *Ibid.*, 4 March 1944.

[465] *Ibid.*, 19 August 1941.

[466] *Ibid.*, 3 March 1942.

[467] *Ibid.*, 23 October 1942.

[468] Lawrence James, *The Middle Class: A History* (London: Little, Brown & Co., 2006), 426.

[469] Preston *Diary*, 30 October 1943.

[470] See, for example, *Ibid.*, 29 March 1941; 24 July 1944; 15 August 1944 (Preston's own tools were stolen).

[471] Len Markham, *Home Front Yorkshire 1939-1945* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword, 2007), 23.

[472] Preston *Diary*, 25 February 1944.

[473] Preston *Diary,* 29 September 1941.

[474] *Ibid.*, 27 May 1941.

[475] *Ibid.*, 22 April 1941.

[476] *Ibid.*, 26 November 1941.

[477] Webster, *Englishness and Empire*.

[478] Nicholas Whitfield, 'Who is My Donor? The Local Propaganda Techniques of London's Emergency Blood Transfusion Service, 1939-45', *Twentieth Century British History*, Vol 24 No 4 (2013): 542-572, 542.

[479] Jones, 'British Cities'.

[480] Roodhouse, *Black Market Britain 1939-1955*.

[481] Aho, *The Things of the World*, 82.

[482] *Ibid.*, 81.

[483] Briggs, *Keep Smiling Through*, 171.

[484] Preston *Diary,* 6 April 1942.

[485] *Ibid.*, 6 January 1941.

[486] *Ibid.*, 29 March 1942.

[487] Calder, *The People's War*, 357.

[488] See, for example, Preston *Diary*, 14 July 1941; see also, Dewhirst, *Keighley in the Second World War*, 73; Ian Dewhirst, 'District's Big War-time Effort', *Keighley News*, Memory Lane, 17 February 2011; Leo Kessler and Eric Taylor, *Yorkshire at War*, (Skipton: Dalesman Publishing Co. Ltd., 1980), 43.

[489] Noakes, *War and the British*, 28.

[490] Preston *Diary,* 27 March 1941; 23 April 1944.

[491] See, for example, A.J.P. Taylor, *English History: 1914-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965), v-vi.

[492] Bernhard Rieger, 'Envisioning the Future: British and German Reactions to the Paris World Fair in 1900', 145-164, 156, in eds. Rieger and Daunton, *Meanings of Modernity*.

[493] See, for instance, Winston Churchill's speech commonly titled 'We Shall Fight on the Beaches', given 4 June 1940 to the House of Commons, https://www.churchillcentral.com/timeline/audio/we-shall-fight-on-the-beaches-4-june-1940, accessed 22 December 2015; Summerfield and Peniston-Bird, *Contesting Home Defence*; Calder, *Myth of the Blitz.*

[494] Preston Diary, 27 April 1944.

[495] Preston *Diary*, 9 June 1945.

[496] *Ibid.*, 9 September 1941.

[497] Rose, *Which People's War?*, 117.

[498] *Ibid.*, 117.

[499] See, for example, Preston *Diary*, 26 July 1941.

[500] *Ibid.*, 3 January 1942.

[501] *Ibid.*, 25 February 1942.

[502] *Ibid.*, 1 August 1942.

[503] See, for example, *Ibid.*, 11 March 1942; 12 March 1942; 28 July 1942.

[504] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 2nd ed. (London: Verso, 2006).

[505] See, Webster, *Englishness and Empire*.

[506] Preston *Diary*, 14 January 1945.

[507] See, for example, Slocombe, *British Posters of the Second World War*.

[508] Hinton, *Nine Wartime Lives*, 10-11.

[509] Rose, *Which People's War?,* 107-108.

[510] Noakes, *War and the British*, 8-9; 14.

[511] Preston *Diary*, 29 May 1941.

[512] *Ibid.*, 12 February 1941.

[513] Calder, *People's War*, 275.

[514] Preston *Diary*, 1 October 1941.

[515] *Ibid.*, 12 April 1943.

[516] *Ibid.*, 11 April 1941.

[517] *Ibid.*, 6 September 1941.

[518] *Ibid.*, 29 January 1941.

[519] *Ibid.*, 23 March 1941.

[520] *Ibid.*, 23 March 1941.

[521] Ed. Howlett and the Central Statistical Office, *Fighting with Figures*, 37.

[522] Rea, 'The Collaborator, the Tyrant and the Resistance', 177.

[523] Connelly, *We Can Take It!*, 3.

[524] Rose, *Which People's War?*, 27.

[525] Hinton, *Nine Wartime Lives*, 11.

[526] Review of Greg Scherkoske, *Integrity and the Virtues of Reason: Leading a Convincing Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), by Andrea C. Westlund, *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews*, Vol 34 No 4 (2014), https://ndpr.nd.edu/news/48010-integrity-and-the-virtues-of-reason-leading-a-convincing-life/.

[527] K.I. Pargament and W.H. Silverman quoted in eds. Spilka et al., *The Psychology of Religion*, 481.

[528] Eds. Spilka et al., *The Psychology of Religion*, 161,

[529] Hinton, *Nine Wartime Lives*, 14-16; see also, Norman Longmate, *How We Lived Then: A History of Everyday Life During the Second World War* (London: Hutchinson & Co. Ltd., 1971), 395

[530] Preston *Diary*, 8 January 1943; for more on the perception of Dunkirk, see Penny Summerfield, 'Dunkirk and the Popular Memory of Wartime Britain, 1940-58', *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol 45 No 4 (November 2010), 788-811.

[531] See, for example, Preston *Diary*, 10 August 1941; 2 October 1941; 8 April 1944.

[532] Calder, *People's War*, 471.

[533] Preston *Diary*, 14 January 1941; see also, 5 May 1941.

[534] *Ibid.*, 20 January 1942.

[535] *Ibid.*, 15 April 1942.

[536] Thomson, 'Psychology and the "Consciousness of Modernity" in Early Twentieth-century Britain', 101.

[537] For discussion on *ITMA*, see Calder, *People's War*, 65-66, 360-362.

[538] Preston *Diary*, 19 March 1942; 13 April 1944.

[539] The use of 'civilian defence efforts' here is intentionally unspecific towards a particular organisation or umbrella organisation such as the Civil Defence Services which did not encompass Home Guard. For a fuller description of the various organisations of the Civil Defence Services, see Mike Brown, *Put That Light Out!: Britain's Civil Defence Services at War 1939-1945* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing Ltd., 1999).

[540] See, for example, Preston *Diary*, 17 January 1941; 13 September 1941.

[541] *Ibid.*, 9 July 1941.

[542] Fire-watching discussed in Calder, *The People's War*, 321-322.

[543] Dewhirst, *Keighley in the Second World War*, 83.

[544] Robert Mackay, *The Test of War: Inside Britain 1939-45* (Milton Park: Routledge, 1998), 177; see, for example, Preston *Diary*, 11 May 1942.

[545] Preston *Diary*, 23 April 1942.

[546] *Ibid.*, 5 June 1942.

[547] *Ibid.*, 20 June 1942.

[548] Summerfield and Peniston-Bird, *Contesting Home Defence*, 27.

[549] Dewhirst, *Keighley in the Second World War*, 35.

[550] Summerfield and Peniston-Bird, *Contesting Home Defence*, 29.

[551] *Ibid.*, 111.

[552] Jones, 'British Cities', 47.

[553] Summerfield and Peniston-Bird, *Contesting Home Defence*, 278; for positive views on the personal development of HG members, see, Alec Lovell, 'Recollections of Alec Lovell at the Royal Ordnance Factory Steeton Nr. Keighley June 1941-July 1945', WW2 People's War, British Broadcasting Corporation, 27 January 2006, (accessed 21 June 2010), http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ww2peopleswar/stories/97/a8900697.shtml; for a full discussion of *Dad's Army*, see, Graham McCann, *Dad's Army: The Story of a Classic Television Show* (London: Fourth Estate, 2001).

[554] Arthur Marwick, *The Homefront: Britain and the Second World War* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1976), 39.

[555] Noakes, *War and the British*, 101.

[556] See, Noakes, *War and the British*; Rose, *Which People's War?*; Summerfield and Peniston-Bird, *Contesting Home Defence*; Lucy Noakes, 'Serve to Save: Gender, Citizenship and Civil Defence in Britain 1937–1941', *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol 47 No 4 (2002), 734–753.

[557] See, Michael Paris, *Warrior Nation: Images of War in British Popular Culture, 1850-2000* (Clerkenwell: Reaktion Books, 2002).

[558] Rose, *Which People's War?*, 128.

[559] Summerfield and Peniston-Bird, *Contesting Home Defence*, 28; see also, Summerfield, *Reconstructing Women's Wartime Lives*, 116.

[560] Savage, *Identities and Social Change in Britain since 1940*, 66.

[561] See, Edgerton, *Britain's War Machine*.

[562] Preston *Diary*, 5 April 1941.

[563] *Ibid.*, 24 July 1941.

[564] *Ibid.*, 22 November 1942.

[565] *Ibid.*, 20 June 1942.

[566] *Ibid.*, 20 June 1942.

[567] *Ibid.*, 18 November 1942.

[568] *Ibid.*, 1 July 1942.

[569] See, for further discussion, Calder, *People's War*, 494-498; Rose, *Which People's War?,* 170-179.

[570] Preston *Diary*, 20 October 1942.

[571] *Ibid.*, 21 October 1942.

[572] *Ibid.*, 26 October 1942.

[573] *Ibid.*, 30 October 1942.

[574] *Ibid.*, 8 May 1943.

[575] See, for example, *Ibid.*, 23 April 1943.

[576] *Ibid.*, 9 November 1942; 11 November 1942; 14 November 1942.

[577] See, for example, *Ibid.*, 6 January 1943; written notes, 6D87/28, WYAS, Bradord.

[578] *Ibid.*, 24 February 1943.

[579] *Ibid.*, 10 April 1943.

[580] See, for example, *Ibid.*, 1, 2 July 1943.

[581] *Ibid.*, 14 February 1943.

[582] *Ibid.*, 25 March 1943.

[583] *Ibid.*, 23 December 1943.

[584] *Ibid.*, 7 October 1943.

[585] See, for example, Norman Longmate, *The Real Dad's Army: The Story of the Home Guard* (Stroud: Amberley, 2012).

[586]Preston *Diary*, 2 April 1943.

[587] *Ibid.*, 4 May 1944.

[588] *Ibid.*, 13 February 1944.

[589] *Ibid.*, 4 July 1943.

[590] *Ibid.*, 18 November 1943.

[591] See, for example, *Ibid.*, 24 June 1943.

[592] See, for example, *Ibid.*, 24 June 1943.

[593] *Ibid.*, 17 April 1944.

[594] *Ibid.*, 29 May 1943.

[595] *Ibid.*, 30 May 1943.

[596] *Ibid.*, 11 June 1944.

[597] See, for instance, *Ibid.*, 7 October 1943.

[598] See, for example, *Ibid.*, 7 November 1943.

[599] *Ibid.*, 8 January 1943.

[600] *Ibid.*, 30 July 1944.

[601] *Ibid.*, 19 November 1944.

[602] *Ibid.*, 9 October 1944; see also, 8 May 1945.

[603] *Ibid.*, 15 November 1944.

[604] *Ibid.*, 10 August 1945.

[605] *Ibid.*, 24 April 1943.

[606] See, for example, *Ibid.*, 10 April 1941; 10 May 1941; 16 June 1941; 19 September 1943; 30 October 1944.

[607] Ben Irvine, *Einstein and the Art of Mindful Cycling* (Lewes: Leaping Hare Press, 2012), 51.

[608] *Ibid.*, 4 June 1944.

[609] *Ibid.*, 15 August 1944.

[610] *Ibid.*, 7 October 1942.

[611] *Ibid.*, 27 September 1941.

[612] See, for example, *Ibid.*, 7 April 1942; 17 April 1944; 3 May 1944; 9 May 1944.

[613] See, for example, *Ibid.,* 22 April 1943.

[614] *Ibid.*, 20 May 1943; see also, 7 May 1944.

[615] *Ibid.*, 20 October 1943.

[616] *Ibid.*, 12 December 1943.

[617] See, for example, *Ibid.*, 27 September 1941; 6 September 1942; 18 April 1942.

[618] *Ibid.*, 8 September 1941.

[619] *Ibid.*, 10 March 1942.

[620] *Ibid.*, 13 January 1941.

[621] *Ibid.*, 19 December 1942; see also, 10 January 1941; 23 December 1943.

[622] *Ibid.*, 15 May 1943.

[623] Kenneth Preston, 'Beginning for Biography', 5.

[624] This was known as the Oxford Oath, or Oxford Pledge in some cases, see, discussion of Oxford and the peace movement more generally in the 1930s in Overy, *Twilight Years*.

[625] The article, titled 'That Unwritten Diary' in *John O'London's* was the only clipping included in the pages of the diary, it did not have any notes written on it or other indication for its presence in the diary, but for its obvious reflection of Preston's sentiment towards diary keeping.

[626] Preston *Diary*, 2 August 1944.

[627] For Preston's opinion on comic strips, see, for example, *Ibid.*, 13 January 1945.

[628] Oshana, *Importance of How We See Ourselves*, 123.

[629] Preston *Diary*, 11 April 1943.

[630] Tosh, *A Man's Place,* 278.

[631] Aho, *Things of the World,* 40.

[632] Summerfield, *Reconstructing Women's Wartime Lives,* 15-17.

[633] Preston *Diary*, 18 August 1941.

[634] *Ibid.*, 9 November 1943.

[635] King, 'Now You See a Great Many Men Pushing Their Pram Proudly', 600.

[636] Mosse, *Image of Man*, 144.

[637] Charles Lemert, 'A History of Identity: The Riddle at the Heart of the Mystery of Life', 3-29, 23, in ed. Elliott, *Routledge Handbook of Identity Studies*.

[638] Ann Branaman, 'Feminism and Identity', 30-48, 30 in ed. Anthony Elliott, *Routledge Handbook of Identity Studies* (Milton Park: Routledge, 2011).

[639] Paul Jennings, *The Local: A History of the English Pub* (Stroud: The History Press, 2007), 206.

[640] Summerfield, *Reconstructing Women's Wartime Lives*, 167.

[641] See, Kenneth Preston, untitled short story, WYAS, Bradford, 6D87/14; for discussion of publicly held perceptions of appropriate female demeanour, see Laura Gowing, 'The manner of submission' Gender an Demeanour in Seventeenth-century London', in *Cultural and Social History*, Vol 10 No 1 (2013), 25-45; Tosh, *Man's Place*.

[642] Kenneth Preston, untitled short story, WYAS, Bradford, 6D87/14.

[643] Virginia Nicholson (presenter) in the 'Beautiful and Damned', episode 2 of 3 of *Glamour's Golden Age*, BBC Four, originally broadcast 27 October 2009. Directed by Colin Lennox.

[644] Preston *Diary*, 15 September 1942.

[645] *Ibid.*, 5 August 1943.

[646] *Ibid.*, 8 December 1943.

[647] *Ibid.*, 11 September 1944.

[648] Tosh, *Man's Place*, 44.

[649] Preston *Diary,* 22 February 1945.

[650] *Ibid.*, 24 August 1942.

[651] *Ibid.*, 4 January 1945.

[652] *Ibid.*, 18 April 1942.

[653] Branaman quoting Barbara J. Riseman, 'Intimate Relationships From a Microstructural Perspective: Men Who Mother', *Gender and Society*, Vol 1 No 1 (1987), 6-32, 9, 'Introduction to Part III', in *Self and Society*, 170.

[654] Preston *Diary*, 2 August 1943.

[655] *Ibid.*, 12 December 1941.

[656] Sue McPhereson, 'Reading Class, Examining Men: Anthologies, Education and Literary Cultures', 24-37, 36, in ed. MacDonald, *Masculine Middlebrow*.

[657] Preston *Diary*, 10 April 1943; see, also, 22 February 1941.

[658] *Ibid.*, 14 March 1944.

[659] *Ibid.*, 19 March 1944.

[660] Summerfield, *Reconstructing Women's Wartime Lives*, 117.

[661] Gosden, *Education in the Second World War*, 97.

[662] Preston *Diary*, 8 February 1943.

[663] *Ibid*., 9 November 1943.

[664] *Ibid.*, 15 October 1944.

[665] *Ibid.*, 20 May 1945.

[666] *Ibid.*, 7 February 1942.

[667] *Ibid.*, 13 August 1945.

[668] *Ibid.*, 3 June 1942.

[669] See, for example, *Ibid.*, 11 May 1943; 23 January 1943.

[670] *Ibid.*, 24 December 1943.

[671] See, for example, Jones, 'British Cities'; Calder, *People's War*, Noakes, *War and the British*; Rose, *Which People's War?*

[672] Jones, 'British Cities', 47.

[673] Preston *Diary*, 4 February 1943.

[674] *Ibid.*, 14 February 1943.

[675] *Ibid.*, 14 March 1943.

[676] *Ibid.*, 22 April 1943.

[677] *Ibid.*, 15 August 1943.

[678] *Ibid.*, 6 November 1942

[679] *Ibid.*, 9 November 1942.

[680] *Ibid.*, 9 October 1942.

[681] *Ibid.*, 11 March 1942.

[682] *Ibid.*, 28 April 1943.

[683] See, for Preston's views on the wealthy, *Ibid.*, 27 September 1942; 30 December 1944.

[684] *Ibid.*, 3 March 1942.

[685] *Ibid.*, 8 January 1944.

[686] Dewhirst, *Keighley in the Second World War*, 69, 70; wartime public perception of Russia is discussed in Rose, *Which People's War?*, 44-56.

[687] Preston *Diary*, 22 June 1941.

[688] My knowledge of these gestures was discovered via wartime editions of the *Keighley News* and discussion in Dewhirst, *Keighley in the Second World War*.

[689] Preston *Diary*, 4 November 1941; see also, 9 January 1943.

[690] *Ibid.*, 16 December 1943; 6 April 1944.

[691] *Ibid.*, 24 June 1944.

[692] See also, *Ibid.,* 27 January 1944.

[694] *Ibid.*, 3 November 1943.

[695] *Ibid.*, 13 November 1943.

[696] *Ibid.*, 28 April 1945.

[697] *Ibid.*, 31 August 1943.

[698] *Ibid.*, 2 September 1943.

[699] *Ibid.*, 6 September 1943.

[700] See, for example, *Ibid.*, 15 August 1943.

[701] Calder, *Myth of the Blitz*, 181.

[702] Preston *Diary*, 11 February 1945.

[703] Mackay, *Half the Battle*, 105.

[704] See, for example, Preston *Diary*, 24 July 1944.

[705] See, for example, *Ibid.*, 7 November 1941.

[706] See, for example, *Ibid.*, 10 November 1941; 5 August 1943; 15 December 1944; 26 February 1945.

[707] See, for example, *Ibid.*, 18 January 1944; 9 September 1941; 4 September 1944.

[708] See, for example, *Ibid*., 10 November 1943; 22 March 1944.

[709] See, for example, *Ibid.*, 4 May 1943; 4 June 1943; 11 May 1942; 15 December 1944.

[710] *Ibid*., 15 December 1944.

[711] See, for example, *Ibid.*, 4 June 1943; 8 May 1944.

[712] Eds. Rieger and Daunton, *Meanings of Modernity*, 2.

[713] *Ibid.*, 3.

[714] See, Calder, 'Where are the War Poets?', 501-523, in *People's War.*

[715] McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures*, 529.

[716] 'Genius of Britain: The Scientists Who Changed the World', *Channel 4 Television Corporation*, first aired 30 May 2010, 5 episodes, presented by David Attenborough, Richard Dawkins, Olivia Judson, Jim Al-Khalili, James Dyson, Stephen Hawking, Paul Nurse, Kathy Sykes, and Robert Winston.

[717] Preston *Diary*, 31 August 1941; 9 November 1942; 4 and 5 September 1943; 8 and 9 December 1942; 13 September 1944; for further discussion of the decline of the arts during the war, see, Calder, 'Where are the War Poets?', 501-523, in *People's War*.

[718] Preston *Diary,* 5 September 1943.

[719] *Ibid.*, 8 August 1943.

[720] Calder, *People's War*, 463.

[721] Savage, *Identities and Social Change in Britain Since 1940*, 66.

[722] *Ibid.*, 67.

[723] See, for example, Preston *Diary*, 5 June 1941.

[724] See, for example, *Ibid.*, 18 July 1942; 8 April 1944.

[725] E.M. Forster, 'What I Believe', 81-90, 82, in eds. E.M. Forster and Oliver Stallybrass, *Two Cheers for Democracy* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd., 1976).

[726] Forster, 'What I Believe', 82.

[727] Preston *Diary*, 3 April 1944.

[728] Paul Verhaeghe, *What About Me? The Struggle for Identity in a Market-Based Society* (London: Scribe, 2014).

[729] Preston *Diary*, 23 April 1945.

[730] *Ibid.,* 24 March 1944.

[731] Briggs, *Special Relationships*, 5; for further discussion of this, see, Preston *Diary*, 24 March 1944.

[732] See also, Preston *Diary*, 5 February 1942.

[733] See, for example, *Ibid.*, 15 January 1944.

[734] *Ibid.*, 12 June 1945.

[735] *Ibid.*, 26 February 1945.

[736] See, for further discussion of Continental Modernists and psychology, Kandel, *Age of Insight.*

[737] Overy, quoting Clive Bell, *Civilization: An Essay* (London: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1928), in *Twilight Years*, 163-164.

[738] Preston *Diary*, 10 September 1941.

[739] *Ibid.*, 20 September 1943.

[740] *Ibid.*, 11 October 1942.

[741] *Ibid.*, 15 July 1945.

[742] *Ibid.*, 29 July 1945.

[743] *Ibid.*, 10 October 1944.

[744] See, for example, *Ibid.*, 11 April 1941, Max Eastman, *The Literary Mind: It's Place in an Age of Science*; 8 July 1941, Conrad Hal Waddington, *The Scientific Attitude* (Penguin Books); 14 September 1941, Hans Reichenbach, *Atom and Cosmos: The World of Modern Physics* (New York: Macmillan, 1933); 7 December 1944, Lt. Col. Merson Davies, *The Bible and Modern Science*; 30 June 1945, L. Susan Stebbing, *Philosophy and the Physicists* (1937); 13 July 1945, A.D. Ritchie, *Civilization, Science and Religion* (London: Penguin Books, 1945); also read Julian Huxley's talk in 'The Listener' on scientific humanism on 17 December 1943.

[745] See, for example, Preston *Diary*, 10 May 1943.

[746] Hastings, *Inferno*, xvii.

[747] Rose, *Which People's War*?, 26.

[748] Connelly, *We Can Take It!*

[749] Aho, *Things of the World*, 6.

[750] *Ibid.*, 6.

[751] Ed. Elliott, *Routledge Handbook of Identity Studies*, xvii.

[752] Preston *Diary*, 10 August 1944.

[753] Aho, *Things of the World*, 38.

[754] Preston *Diary*, 18 July 1942.

[755] See, for example, *Ibid.*, 3 June 1944

[756] *Ibid.*, 21 May 1942.

[757] *Ibid.*, 28 October 1941.

[758] *Ibid.*, 12 January 1941.

[759] See, for example, *Ibid.*, 22 July 1943.

[760] *Ibid.*, 7 January 1945.

[761] *Ibid.*, 7 September 1941.

[762] See, for example, *Ibid.*, 16 June 1941.

[763] See, for further discussion of Romantic notions of nature, Anthony D. Smith, *The Nation Made Real: Art and National Identity in Western Europe, 1600-1850,* especially 'The Spirit of Nature', 96-107 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

[764] Michael Bathalomew, 'Englishness: The Case of H.V. Morton', 203-217, 208, in eds. Keith Dockray and Keith Laybourn, *The Representation and Reality of War: The British Experience* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 1999).

[765] Preston *Diary*, 1 February 1943

[766] *Ibid.*, 10 August 1943.

[767] *Ibid.*, 27 January 1944.

[768] See, for example, *Ibid.*, 17 March 1942.

[769] Williams quoting D.H. Lawrence, *Country and the City*, 267.

[770] Williams, *Ibid.*, 291.

[771] Preston *Diary*, 10 September 1941; see also, 8 March 1943.

[772] Hinton, *Nine Wartime Lives*, 15.

[773] Preston *Diary*, 5 September 1941.

[774] Knight, *Spuds, Spam and Eating for Victory*, 1.

[775] Preston *Diary*, 7 October 1941.

[776] *Ibid.*, 26 January 1943; Preston quoted '£14,000,000 a day', whether this is accurate or not was not verified.

[777] See, for example, television series 'Ration Book Britain', *Yesterday*; 'The 1940s House', *Channel 4*, 2001.

[778] Preston *Diary*, 14 August 1942.

[779] See, for example, *Ibid.*, 19 June 1942.

[780] This refers to Royal Ordnance Factory Steeton.

[781] See, for example, Preston *Diary*, 6 February 1941; 16 August 1942; 9 February 1943; 20 March 1943.

[782] Edgerton, *Britain's War Machine,* 15, 18, discusses Britain's shortage of timber during the war.

[783] Preston *Diary*, 23 January 1944.

[784] See, *Ibid.*, 29 November 1942.

[785] *Ibid.*, 9 November 1942.

[786] *Ibid*., 21 September 1941; 21 September 1944.

[787] Hinton, *Nine Wartime Lives*, 138.

[788] Preston *Diary*, 19 June 1942.

[789] Tosh, *Man's Place*, 13.

[790] McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures*, 86.

[791] See, for example, Preston *Diary*, 12 May 1941.

[792] See, for example, *Ibid.*, 8 March 1943; 31 May 1943; 11 May 1944.

[793] See, for example, *Ibid.*, 10 February 1941.

[794] Aho, quoting Immanual Kant's *Anthropolgie* in *Things of the World*, 109.

[795] Aho, quoting Max Scheler in *Things of the World*, 110.

[796] Preston *Diary*, 11 May 1944.

[797] Ed. Elliott, *Routledge Handbook of Identity Studies*, xiv.

[798] Hinton, *Nine Wartime Lives*, 5.

[799] Oshana, *Importance of How We See Ourselves*, 151.

[800] Aho, Things of the World, 83.

[801] For his perception of how others saw him, see, for instance, Kenneth Preston, 'Beginning of Autobiography', 1; Preston *Diary*, 8 August 1941.

[802] Preston *Diary*, 8 August 1941.

[803] Lemert quoting Georg Simmel, 'A History of Identity', 9, in ed. Elliott, *Routledge Handbook of Identity Studies.*

[804] Smith, *Nation Made Real*, 96.

[805] Langhamer, 'Love, Selfhood and Authenticity in Post-War Britain', 278.

[806] Preston *Diary*, 24 September 1942.

[807] This feeling of having something to offer can be found in a number of prolific diarists, including Samuel Pepys and Sonya Sontag; see, for discussion, Claire Tomalin, *Samuel Pepys: The Unequalled Self* (London: Viking, 2002) and ed. David Rieff, *Susan Sontag, Reborn*.

[808] Preston *Diary*, 14 October 1943.

[809] *Ibid.*, 27 October 1943.

[810] See, for example, *Ibid.*, 19 September 1943.

[811] *Ibid.*, 17 June 1945.

[812] *Ibid.*, 12 May 1942.

[813] See, for example, *Ibid.*, 6 October 1943; 1 December 1943.

[814] See, for example, *Ibid.*, 13 December 1943.

[815] See, for example, *Ibid.*, 12 May 1942.

[816] *Ibid.*, 23 March 1943.

[817] See, for example, *Ibid.*, 30 January 1941.

[818] *Ibid.*, 26 July 1941.

[819] See, for example, *Ibid.*, 12 January 1941.

[820] *Ibid.*, 14 May 1941.

[821] *Ibid.*, 2 February 1941.

[822] *Ibid.*, 23 July 1942.

[823] *Ibid.*, 19 April 1943; 7 November 1943.

[824] *Ibid.*, 3 June 1943.

[825] *Ibid.*, 2 August 1942.

[826] *Ibid.*, 13 April 1944.

[827] *Ibid.*, 17 January 1942; see also, 16 December 1944.

[828] *Ibid.*, 29 December 1943.

[829] *Ibid.*, 28 November 1944.

[830] *Ibid.*, 4 December 1944.

[831] *Ibid.*, quoting H.G. Wells, *Country and the City*, 232.

[832] See, for instance, Preston *Diary*, 27 October 1942.

[833] *Ibid.*, 7 June 1945.

[834] See, for example, *Ibid.*, 10 February 1941; 15 July 1945.

[835] *Ibid.*, 30 July 1941.

[836] See, for example, *Ibid.*, 4 June 1944; for his discussion of the rewards of nature, see 22 July 1944; 3 August 1944; 16 and 17 August 1944.

[837] *Ibid.*, 15 July 1945.

[838] *Ibid*., 7 July 1945; 13 August 1945.

[839] *Ibid.*, 16 July 1945.

[840] *Ibid.*, 5 August 1945.

[841] Watson, *Modern Mind*, 375.

[842] Calder, *People's War*, 469.

[843] Preston *Diary*, 7 September 1941.

[844] *Ibid.*, 5 May 1944.

[845] *Ibid.*, 21 January 1945.

[846] See, for example, *Ibid.*, 3 December 1942; 6 May 1944; 10 July 1944; 7 August 1945; 13 January 1945; 12 August 1945.

[847] Williams, *Country and the City*, 298.

[848] George Orwell, 'Poetry and the Microphone' (London: New Saxon Pamphlet, 1945), http://orwell.ru/library/articles/poetry/english/e_poetry, accessed 6 May 2013.

[849] Preston *Diary*, 3 April 1944; see, also, for example, 4 August 1942.

[850] Winston Churchill, radio broadcast on June 4, 1945 commonly titled 'The Gestapo Speech', https://www.churchillcentral.com/timeline/video/talking-churchill-the-gestapo-speech-4-june-1945, accessed 22 December 2015.

[851] See, for example, Preston *Diary*, 1 March 1945.

[852] See, for example, *Ibid.*, 21 October 1944.

[853] Morgan and Evans, *Battle for Britain*, 79; see also, McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures*, 529.

[854] Preston *Diary*, 21 August 1942.

[855] *Ibid.*, 30 December 1944; 1 March 1945.

[856]See, for example, *Ibid.*, 26 February 1944.

[857] See, for example, *Ibid.*, 28 February 1943.

[858] See, for example, *Ibid.*, 27 September 1942.

[859] See, for instance, *Ibid*., 27 January 1944.

[860] *Ibid.,* 16 October 1944.

[861] *Ibid.*, 1 June 1945.

[862] See, for instance, *Ibid.*, 21 October 1944.

[863] See, for example, *Ibid.,* 27 January 1944.

[864] *Ibid.*, 11 July 1941.

[865] Nicholas Deakin and Justin Davis Smith*, 'Labour, Charity and Voluntary Action: the Myth of Hostility',* 69-93, 77-78, in eds. Matthew Hilton and James McKay, *The Ages of Volunatism: How We Got to the Big Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); for further discussion on voluntary organisations during this time, see, eds. Colin Rochester, George Campbell Gosling, Alison Penn, and Meta Zimmeck, *Understanding the Roots of Voluntary Action: Historical Perspectives on Current Social Policy* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2011); Matthew Hilton, Nicholas J. Crowson, Jean-Francois Mouhot, James McKay, *A Historical Guide to NGOs in Britain: Charities, Civil Society and the Voluntary Sector since 1945* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

[866] Preston *Diary*, 16 February 1944.

[867] Ezra Pound, *Make It New: Essays by Ezra Pound* (London: Faber and Faber, 1934).

[868] Preston *Diary*, 6 November 1944; see also, 7 August 1945.

[869] Bernhard Rieger and Martin Daunton, Introduction, 1-24, 7, in eds. Rieger and Daunton, *Meanings of Modernity*.

[870] Bernhard Rieger, 'Envisioning the Future: British and German Reactions to the Paris World Fair in 1900', 145-164, 145, in eds. Rieger and Daunton, *Meanings of Modernity*.

[871] Rose, *Which People's War?,* 62.

[872] Preston *Diary*, 26 July 1945.

[873] Brodie Waddell, *God, Duty and Community in English Economic Life, 1660-1720* (Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2012).

[874] Preston *Diary*, 20 February 1944.

[875] *Ibid.*, 5 November 1944.

[876] *Ibid.*, 2 December 1944.

[877] *Ibid.*, 6 December 1944, referring to a church near Ravenna, Italy.

[878] Primarily the V1 and V2 rockets.

[879] *Ibid.*, 13 January 1945.

[880] *Ibid.*, 7 May 1945.

[881] *Ibid.*, 7 May 1945.

[882] *Ibid.*, 26 June 1945.

[883] *Ibid.*, 26 July 1945.

[884] *Ibid.*, 6 August 1945.

[885] *Ibid.*, 6 August 1945.

[886] *Ibid.*, 7 August 1945.

[887] Savage, *Identities and Social Change in Britain Since 1940*, 66-67.

[888] Edgerton, 'War, Reconstruction and the Nationalization of Britain, 1939-1951,' 30, referring to Milward, *The Economic Efforts of Two World Wars on Britain*.

[889] Edgerton, *Britain's War Machine*, 3.

[890] *Ibid.*, xvi.

[891] Ian Morris, *War! What is it Good For?: Conflict and the Progress of Civilization from Primates to Robots* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2014).

[892] Brendan Evan, 'The Second World War and the Reform of Further Education in Britain', 235-258, 235, in eds. Dockray and Laybourn, *Representation and Reality of War*.

[893] Preston *Diary*, 7 May 1945.

[894] *Ibid.*, 19 August 1945.

[895] *Ibid.*, 15 August 1945.

[896] *Ibid.*, 9 May 1945.

[897] *Ibid.*, 2 August 1945.

[898] *Ibid.*, 3 August 1945.

[899] See, for further discussion, James Hinton, '1945 and the Apathy School', *History Workshop Journal*, 43 (1997), 266-272.

[900] Rose, *Which People's War?,* 69, referring to Hinton, '1945 and the Apathy School', 266-272.

[901] Langhamer, 'Love, Selfhood and Authenticity in Post-War Britain'; Claire Langhamer, *The English in Love: The Intimate Story of an Emotional Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

[902] Hinton, *Nine Wartime Lives*, 204.

[903] *Ibid.*

[904] *Ibid.*, 1.

[905] Hastings, *All Hell Let Loose*, xviii.

[906] Tomalin, *Samuel Pepys*, xxix.

[907] Tosh, *Pursuit of History*, 262; Hinton, *Nine Wartime Lives*, 19.

[908] Ugolini, *Experiencing War as the 'Enemy Other'.*

[909] Simon Schama (presenter), 'A History of Britain', *British Broadcasting Corporation*, first aired 2000, episode 10 of 10 episodes.

[910] Aho, *Things of the World*, 6.

[911] Preston *Diary*, 20 October 1944.

[912] See, for example, *Ibid.*, 27 October 1942.

[913] *Ibid.*, 10 November 1943.

[914] See, for example, Preston *Diary*, 31 August 1941; 24 June1943.

[915] E.M. Forster, 'Art for Arts Sake', 102-108, 106, in *Two Cheers for Democracy* (reprinted by Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1976).

[916] Melvynn Bragg, *Two Cultures*, episode 3 of 3, podcast audio, 'What's the Value of Culture Today', originally broadcast January 2, 2013, BBC Radio 4, retrieved from http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b01pmg02/episodes/downloads.

[917] Alex Preston, 'The War Against Humanities at Britain's Universities', *The Guardian*, Education, 29 March 2015, http://www.theguardian.com/education/2015/mar/29/war-against-humanities-at-britains-universities, accessed 29 March 2015.

[918] Tosh, quoting Eric Hobsbawm, 'C (for Crisis)', *London Review of Books*, Vol 31 No 15 (August 2009), 12-13, in *The Pursuit of History*, 37.

[919] See, for example, Angus Calder, 'Britain's Good War?', *History Today*, Vol 45 No 5 (May 1995); Mark Weber, 'The "Good War" Myth of World War Two', *Institute for Historical Review* (article presented as a lecture at an IHR meeting in Costa Mesa, California, on May 24, 2008), http://www.ihr.org/news/weber_ww2_may08.html, accessed November 2015; see also, for disuccsion, Connelly, *Britain in the Second World War*, 2.

[920] See, for discussion, Noakes, *War and the British.*

[921] Preston *Diary*, 2 October 1941.

[922] See, for instance, Preston's discussion of this in Preston *Diary*, 29 November 1944; see also Preston *Diary*, 3 June 1942, 24 May 1943, 26 May 1943.

[923] Open access is allowed to the whole collection, all of which is located at WYAS, Bradford, 6D87/6, however, no quotation or direct reference that identifies its source can be taken without written permission from Mr Allan Preston.

[924] Allan Preston, 'Biography of Kenneth Preston', 1-5.

[925] Preston *Diary*, 15 August 1945.

[926] Allan Preston, 'Biography of Kenneth Preston', 3.

[927] *Keighley News*, 14 August 1965.

[914] For his belief of the power of small groups to effect change, see, for instance, Preston *Diary*, 20 October 1944.

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